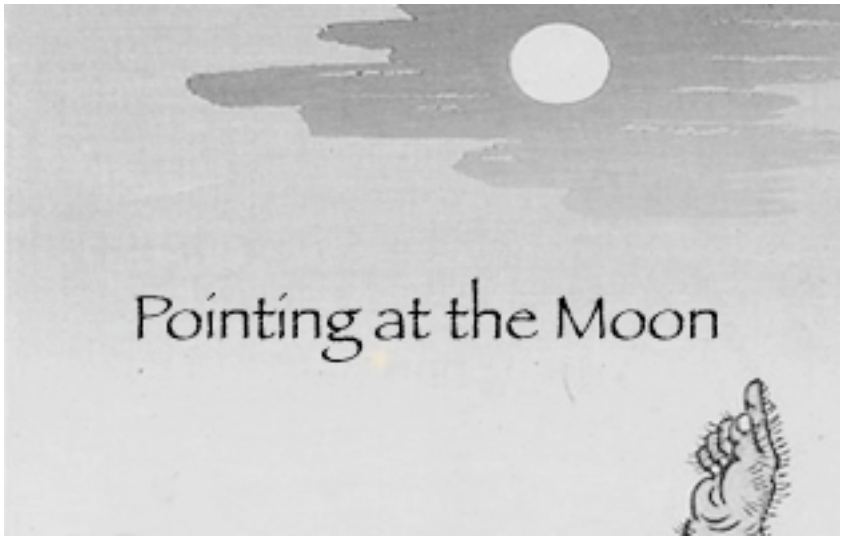

An Introduction to Spiritual Consciousness

Lee Scantlin

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We are not human beings trying to have spiritual experiences; we are spiritual beings having human experiences.

> *"Our work is to make our transition from human beings, acted upon by forces, powers and influences beyond ourselves, to spiritual beings, where the infinite invisible within, without and all about us is the only power, influence or force acting upon our experience.*
>
> *This transition must be consciously made, by consciously declaring and realizing that we are no longer under material or mental law, but live by grace, that we no longer love, fear or hate the visible universe, but yield ourselves to the infinite invisible, which formed us and gave us dominion by grace."*
>
> Joel S. Goldsmith

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Introduction

I love the story about a Zen master who had taken a vow of silence. He was trying to indicate the moon to his disciples, but the students saw gesturing, not pointing; they saw the hand, not the moon.

They came as close as they could to the master's hand and arm, in hopes of discovering their secret. One noticed that one finger was extended forward and three backward, and assumed that was significant. Another focused on the thumb extending upward and no finger downward, and based his theories on that. A third studied the relationship of the fingers to the hand, the hand to the arm, and the angle of the arm to the body (which, of course, changed as the moon moved across the evening sky).

One monk glanced up, saw the moon, and immediately understood what the silent master was doing: that the gesturing was pointing. He understood perfectly and completely. He pointed at the moon himself and left in disgust when the other monks began examining his hand.

The difficulty is that Truth is ineffable. There is no way to talk about Truth. All we can do is point to it, and the way we point is with words. Unfortunately, there are no right words to use, so we have to use those we think will best serve as pointers. But the same word has a different meaning for everyone who hears it, based on their particular background, education, ethnicity, age, sex, religion…

My most important teachers have been Joel S. Goldsmith (Joel), Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh (Osho), and Robert Adams (Robert). I also have learned much from several of Joel's students, especially including Herb Fitch, Barbara Muhl (Barbara), Meg Johnson and Doris Crawford.

Joel had his first experience of truth in 1928 and continued to have revelations until his passing in 1964. Joel found himself to be a healer as a result of his first experience. He didn't know initially what the healing principle was, but he knew he needed to learn it and understand it in order to keep it. In 1945 he wrote *The Infinite Way* revealing the principles he had discovered over 17 years of healing and meditation.

Joel became a premier teacher of what he called "the letter of truth," statements of (or pointers at) the metaphysical and mystical principles which underlay his healing practice. His students were primarily metaphysicians from the Christian Science, Unity and New Thought movements, so he used expressions, terms and quotations from Mary Baker Eddy's writings and the New Testament to best communicate with them. But for many of us today that very Christian choice of words doesn't work. We may not consider the New Testament to be an authority. We may not accept Jesus as a master. Joel's teaching is in a mid-twentieth century metaphysical Christian vocabulary, which doesn't speak to many of the students in our twenty-first century community in California.

Osho is the most amazing master of every path I have ever encountered. His talks on Zen, Sufism, Tantra, Buddhism, Tao, Jesus' teachings and every other significant spiritual path expanded horizons for me in every direction. Being with him enabled me to understand Joel at a whole new level.

Robert became spontaneously enlightened when he was 14. He subsequently learned ways to express his experience from Ramana Maharshi and other enlightened masters he spent time with in India. His words are those of the Advaita Vedanta (non-dualistic) tradition. Robert, however, did not claim to have a teaching. He was the Teaching. Sitting with him comes as close to directly touching, rather than pursuing a pointing, as is possible.

Robert, Osho and Joel all had their spiritual experiences spontaneously, although Joel had many more experiences during his life. Their teachings appeared to be quite different, yet my inner being knew they pointed to the same Truth, even though at first I couldn't see how their teachings corresponded. Now I know that the level and background of their students differed significantly, and that the students determine, to a large extent, the vocabulary and level of the class.

This book is an attempt to point at the one Truth that Robert, Osho, and Joel experienced, using words that have as little conditioned, emotional meaning associated with them as possible – and with no claims as to the authority of any teacher or teaching.

Although this book is an introduction, it contains a great deal of pointing. A good way to read it might be to read through one chapter at a time, then go back and read each paragraph in that chapter, one by one, sentence by sentence, making sure that you understand what each sentence is saying. It's not important to accept or agree with anything. What's important is to hear it – let it in. Then take it out into the world with you and see whether it's true for you or not.

I. Emptying Out

There's another Zen story about a scholar and intellectual in a university town in Japan, renowned for his erudition in numerous philosophies and religions, with an alphabet of letters after his name, who went to a Zen master to acquire instruction.

The Zen master invited him in. They sat and, while the intellectual described all the initials after his name, the Zen master made tea. Then, while the intellectual listed all the philosophies that he'd mastered, the Zen master poured the tea. And while the intellectual described the depths of his understanding in various religions, the Zen master drank his tea.

When the intellectual began to explore the certificates, awards and acknowledgements he'd received, the Zen master lifted the teapot, refilled his own cup, and poured more tea into the intellectual's still full cup. The tea, of course, went all over everything, including the intellectual.

The intellectual screamed, "What are you doing?"

The Zen master replied, "Observing that before fresh tea can be poured into a cup, it must first be emptied," and sent the intellectual on his way.

And that's where we start. Before we can add spiritual understanding to our teacup, we have to empty out all the nonsense we've been conditioned with that's currently filling it. We're certainly not going to empty our teacups completely by reading this book. That's probably several years' work. But perhaps we'll be able to discover how full our cups are and identify some of what's filling them.

Mystical truth is invariably contrary to human reason, so there are lots of beliefs that have to go before we can gain this new understanding. We have to empty out our dependency on the intellect, all our concepts of god and of prayer, our faith in orthodox religions, our belief in the external reality of matter, and our human conditioning itself.

Intellect

The first thing that has to go is our reliance on our intellects. Spiritual understanding cannot be acquired through the use of the intellect. Human consciousness, which includes the intellect, rejects spiritual truth. Truth cannot be understood. It has to be experienced. It's a presence, a state of being, not something rational.

It isn't enough, for our purposes, to learn something and be able to parrot it. An 'A' on a spiritual consciousness test gets the booby prize. Spiritual Truth has to be realized. We need the clicks, the ah-ha's, of understanding. Often we will know a particular truth for years; then, perhaps for no obvious reason, we'll get an insight, and a much deeper understanding will unfold. We will realize what the words meant at a whole new level. Of course, if we're asked to explain our new understanding, we'll discover that we can only use the same old words we had before.

So what's the point of reading these words, this book? Learning the letter of truth is the first step towards having a spiritual experience. Conditioning clogs our brains like

molasses. Learning the letter of truth begins to thin the molasses, so spiritual faculties like insight and intuition can begin to see out through it.

When you read this book, don't read it with your intellect. On the first reading, don't even question it. Osho told us, "If you ask a question and I answer it, your mind (intellect) immediately generates ten more questions. The process never ends. I am not here to answer your questions. I am here to bring you to the place where you stop asking questions."

The idea is to be passive in this process. Don't listen for something in particular; simply hear what's being said. Be as open and embracing as possible. You don't need to agree. You don't need to believe or accept anything that's being said. Just try to hear it. If it's different from what you currently believe, that doesn't make either it, or you, right or wrong. Believing has nothing to do with it. Just hear what's being said; let it in, and perhaps later go back and read it again to see if any of it is true for you.

Concepts of God

The next things that need to be emptied out are every one of our concepts about god. This shouldn't be too painful. It's not like we're being asked to give up something that's been working for us, but we may be surprised how deeply conditioned these concepts are.

Historically, mankind's concepts of god have reflected the current level of human consciousness. Probably man's first concepts of god were as elemental powers of nature, such as storms, thunder and lightening – anything beyond human understanding. Later the Egyptians had sun gods and cat gods, and then the pharaohs became gods. The Greeks, Romans and Vikings had pantheons of gods with very human behaviors, characteristics and jobs. In England, the Druids believed god was nature and worshipped trees. In India, there are 1000 different forms of god with different characteristics, roles and powers. Individuals worship the concepts that appeal to them.

The Hebrews had many gods until Abraham taught that there was only one god. Then they worshipped the one god, except that the one god was really just an amalgamation of all their gods, one god that did everything instead of individual gods taking care of individual functions.

Gradually human consciousness has become more sophisticated, and our concepts of god have reflected that. We've gotten away from punishing gods that killed our enemies, or delivered floods or plagues, and chosen less frightening gods. We've had gods sitting on clouds, gods with long white beards, gods hanging on crosses. We've moved on to gods that are one or two steps above Santa Claus, available, perhaps, to fulfill our needs if we're not naughty.

Orthodox religions today teach of a god who apparently withholds good from us until properly prayed to. That god also supposedly rewards or punishes us according to our deeds, although there is little evidence of that in the world. We find plenty of unrewarded goodness, and plenty of unpunished evil.

If we look at how concepts of god have continually changed as human consciousness has developed, we can conclude that there's no reason to believe that our current concept of god is ultimate or even true.

Any concept, by the way, is limiting. Concepts, by their very nature, draw boundaries around things. You can't possibly have a valid concept about an infinite, omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent god of which most spiritual teachings speak.

So we need to look at our current concepts of god and consider where they came from and why we think they have any validity. False concepts of god (and every concept of god is false) have to be emptied out to make room for the understanding we're seeking.

Concepts of Prayer

Our concepts of prayer are closely related to our concepts of god so they will probably have to go too. But no loss! A quick look at the efficacy of prayer reveals that we're giving up nothing, while making room for fresh tea.

Prayer has changed over time, keeping pace with the current concept of god. Originally, mankind was probably just scared to death of the natural powers that appeared to happen at random. But as we became self aware and aware of our ability to manipulate our environment and others, we, no doubt, quickly began to try to manipulate god. We developed an unending list of ways of attempting to influence god to do what we wanted: dancing, drumming, chanting (including chanting the names of god, sacrificing animals, doves, virgins, slaughtering enemies (ours and our god's), torturing, burning incense, sprinkling holy water – the list is endless. We've prayed for ourselves, our parents, our children, starving children, world peace, the annihilation of evil and so forth.

During WWII, Lutheran mothers in Germany and in the United States, members of the same church, prayed that their sons be spared and the enemy's sons be defeated (killed) and some were, and some weren't, on both sides. During the Holocaust, there was no doubt a great deal of praying, by a very religious group of people, to little avail. And no doubt, hundreds of thousands of people, world over, were praying for peace for years. It happened when one side ran out of the necessities for waging war.

Looking back, we find no evidence that any technique of prayer has ever been successful. There is no period in time when the well fed outnumbered the starving, the healthy outnumbered the sick, the secure outnumbered the at-risk, but they all have always been praying.

We've gotten more sophisticated. Rather than confront the possibility that prayer doesn't work, we've stacked the deck in god's favor: We pray to god for something. If he gives it to us, it means he loves us. If he doesn't give it to us, it means it wasn't good for us, and he loves us. If he gives it to us and it subsequently turns out not to be good for us, that means that god, in his infinite wisdom, has allowed us to learn a lesson because he loves us. We have an amazing ability to stick our heads in the sand. (I tried praying in the same manner to my cat for a while, in honor of the Egyptians, and got identical results. He loves me!)

Prayer implies certain things about god, by the way. It we are praying to get god to do something he isn't doing now, it implies either that he isn't omniscient and omnipresent (or we wouldn't have had to tell him about his oversight) or he's been withholding it from us until we begged properly. You may not be happy with a god who withholds peace or allows children to starve until we learn how to influence him in the proper manner.

So take a look at your prayer practice, along with your concepts of god, to see if you wouldn't like to make some room in your cup for something a little sweeter.

Orthodox Religion

Next to go is orthodox religion. You may belong to an orthodox religion you feel is quite positive for you, and it may be in many ways, but it's probably not helping you grow spiritually.

Churches are usually organized by the unenlightened. Not having the truth, they need structure and dogma. Spiritual Truth has to be taught in consciousness, by one who has the consciousness, like the master, to one who is prepared to hear, like the monk who saw the moon. The experience has to be transmitted, and it can't be through doctrine and dogma.

When the mute Zen master died, there were immediately three sects of gesturing, founded by the students who each thought they had the correct understanding of the master's teaching: the finger extended sect, the thumb raised sect, and the gesturing arm sect. Of course none of these could transmit the truth, since the moon wasn't even mentioned in any of their teachings. Due to a mistranslation of the extended finger manuscript over the years, the index finger became the middle finger. In the thumbs up school the significance of index finger position was lost, and the gesture was demonstrated with the fist closed. The arm gesturing school finally became the religion of taxi drivers in Italy. Meanwhile, the monk who did see the moon quietly pointed it out to a few disciples.

Another problem with orthodox religions is that they are businesses. They need to support themselves. They need to attract a large enough membership to provide the funds necessary to pay for places of worship and to support whatever they call their priest class.

There are two difficulties with this: 1. They will probably need to modify the teaching so that it is understandable and acceptable to enough people to pay the rent. In other words, they'll need to dilute the message and promise people things material rather than spiritual. That, of course, is what's been going on for millennia, without anyone really getting anything. 2. If they make the teaching warm and fuzzy enough, they will need more priests to meet the requirements of the expanding membership. That means moving up the most advanced people, whether or not they have experienced the teaching and are able to transmit it; it means moving up those who have memorized the doctrine better than others. Even if there is some truth in the doctrine, those who haven't yet attained the consciousness are unable to transmit it.

Another difficulty is that most orthodox religions do not encourage you to, or teach you how to, have your own direct personal experience of Truth. Since they haven't had their own experience of Truth, they can't show you how to have it. And, of course, if you could have your own direct personal experience of Truth, you would no longer need a priest and a church.

Many organizations which need to hold a membership and have nothing of real value to offer use rewards and fear to control members. Many churches promise you something in some next life (good if you conform to the dogma, bad if you don't) rather that offering you something now. Others have begun providing fellowship, counseling, support groups, teen

groups, and a variety of other services which have absolutely nothing to do with spiritual attainment, to keep their membership happy.

When churches become political, another can of worms is opened. New agendas take precedence over teaching Truth. Also, churches, which have fallible (unenlightened) leaders giving teachings which they claim are infallible, bring their organizations into positions from which they can't extract themselves. They either have to admit that their teachings weren't, in fact, infallible, along with potentially everything else that the unillumined illuminator said, or they have to live with false teachings.

The point, by the way, of developing your own spiritual consciousness is to have your own immediate, intimate, personal experience of Truth. This eliminates the need for priests or anyone else to teach you or pray for you, since you now have your own experience and your own contact with the source of all wisdom.

If your current religion doesn't facilitate your own attainment, you need to make room for a brew that does.

Matter

Another concept we need to empty out, and this one may challenge us, is matter, good old matter: tables and chairs, nuts and bolts, atoms and molecules – stuff like that.

I realized many years ago that there was no way I could prove that there was anything "out there," by which I meant external to my body. I couldn't prove that anything my senses perceived was real. The story I was being told was that light waves bounce off an object, say an apple, and enter my eye. They strike the retina at the back of my eye, which converts the light waves (or particle-like photons) into electrical impulses traveling up my optic nerve. Eventually these impulses reach some optical center within my brain and I see an image which I call "apple." What bothered me was that all my brain had ever encountered was electrical impulses, so I couldn't see where the visual image of the apple came from. My brain only knew nerve impulses. Also, I understood that the frequency of the impulses might in some way reflect the frequency of the light waves, but that still doesn't account for red. The brain is creating all these sensations, but based on what?

The same is true for the other four senses. Some sensor converts supposed physical encounters into impulses on nerves, which go to the appropriate center in the brain, from which smells, tastes, textures, and sounds miraculously appear, even though the brain has never encountered anything other than electrical impulses, not smells, for example.

I also noticed that the same images, sounds, smells and other sensations were showing up in my dreams at night, when there certainly were no external material sources. Now I really had no way to prove there's anything out there.

Then I realized that my body was just one more of these conglomerations of sensations and images in my brain, so I couldn't prove I had one of those either. And sure enough, I show up in my dreams in a body that doesn't exist.

And, of course, my head is part of my body, and my brain and those neurons are supposedly within my head – images within my brain, brain within my head, head part of my body, which is one of the images. I just sort of imploded into nothing.

Finally, all these thoughts are supposedly just more neurons firing electrical impulses around in different areas of the same non-provable brain. The idea that I have a brain is just a thought in my brain. Whoops! Of course, at that time I didn't really believe I didn't exist. I just knew I couldn't prove that I did.

If you're thinking your mind couldn't make all this up, consider dreams. Every time we have a dream, a universe suddenly appears, supposedly inside our brain somewhere, except it appears to be bigger than our brain. And notice that not only space, but time, is created in the dream. The apparent duration of the dream might be hours, but an electroencephalograph (EEG) attached to our brain would show that our dreams typically last only for a second or two. Space and time are created within the dream, within mind.

While we're talking about time, notice that we also can't prove there ever was a past. There are only thoughts, which we label memories, being thought right now. Your dreams don't start with creation or with Adam and Eve. They start at some point in time right in the middle, as if the dream were already complete up to that point. If someone asked you at the beginning of your dream what you did the day before, you would have an answer. Even though the dream has just begun, the you in the dream doesn't think it's in a dream that just started. It thinks it has a past.

Your dream may contain vast spaces, a sky full of stars, or it might take place inside a room. You might be sitting at a coffee table. You can knock on the table; it's hard, solid, matter. You're in the dream, experiencing the table with all five senses. You can see it, feel it, hear the sound of the knock, smell the wood, and lick it, if you like. You're sure it's real.

If I came into your dream, sat down at the table with you and told you it was all a dream, you'd say, "Nonsense." You'd pound on the table and tell me, "This is real!" It's as real to the *you* in the dream as this world is to the *you* in this "reality." There's no reason to think that this world isn't just a dream too.

The test in logical positivism for the meaningfulness of a statement is the ability to at least conceive of an experiment that would add weight towards proving or disproving it. If you can't, that statement isn't meaningful. I still haven't been able to conceive of an experiment that might lend weight to the claim that there's anything "out there."

Reasonably enough, science confirms that there's nothing out there. Matter is made up of molecules, with *lots* of space between them. Molecules are made up of atoms, with *lots* of space between them. The atoms are made of a nucleus and electrons, with *lots* of space between them. These particles are made up of sub-atomic particles, with *lots* of space between them, except that maybe they're waves, or probability clouds. There are even virtual particles that disappear before they appear. There's nothing solid, nothing real to be found in any of this.

So our conviction that there is "real" matter "out there," and that I am, or am in, a physical body with a mind, is on the list of beliefs that will cause the fresh tea to go on the floor.

Human Conditioning

Human consciousness, of course, is absolutely certain about all of these concepts we're questioning. Human consciousness has conditioned us thoroughly with these beliefs: that

there is a god and it's worthwhile to pray; that churches are enlightening, or saving, or serving their congregations; that matter is real and solid. Human consciousness is convinced that everything we've said here is pure nonsense. Spiritual truth is always completely opposite to human belief, and we are conditioned from birth to believe what human consciousness believes.

This work is very hard. Very few of us have any idea of the extent and depth to which we have been conditioned. Joel points out three more human conditionings that have to go if we are to attain spiritual consciousness.

The first is the belief in more than one power. If there is an infinite god that is omnipotent, then there is no power left over for anything else. Yet deeply ingrained in human consciousness is the belief that innumerable other things have power: germs have power, earthquakes have power, fire has power, tidal waves have power, bombs have power, bullets have power, the law has power, medications have power. In human consciousness, in a society that claims to believe in one omnipotent god, there is an ingrained belief in an almost infinite number of powers other than god. Hence, we wind up with god doing battle against the devil, against disease, against all these other powers, and not doing a very good job of battling. If people are sick, we may pray for them, but we send them to a doctor, because we think medicine has the power to help them. We're really just using god as the backup in case the medicine doesn't work. We certainly don't trust that the matter is in god's hands and the disease has no power.

So consider whether you believe that things have power or that god is omnipotent – you can't have both.

The second human conditioning is judgment, all the judgments we make about things. In human consciousness there is not only a deep-seated belief in more than one power, there is also the belief in good and evil and in all the other dualities. One of the identifying features of human consciousness is dualistic thinking. If there's good, there has to be bad; if there's tall, there has to be short; if there's fat, there has to be thin. Every condition implies its opposite. When we call something beautiful, we create ugly.

But all these conditions are in our minds; they are not real conditions. A person may be tall standing next to a short person, but they're short next to a taller person. A person is bad until what's socially acceptable changes; then they're good. If I belch after dinner in the U.S.A., I'm rude, but if I do it in some other countries, I'm applauding the cook. For everything we think is good, we can find someone who thinks it's bad. For everything we think is bad, we can find someone who thinks it's good. Every attribute we ascribe to something is relative, and we may find ourselves ascribing the opposite attribute to it momentarily.

All of these dualities are labels that we add to what's there. What's there is a person, but tall or short, beautiful or ugly, good or bad is all added by our minds. Joel calls these additions judgments, and because of all our judgments, we don't see what's there. We believe our judgments so that's what we see. Hence, judgments have to go.

The third and deepest conditioning in human consciousness is self-preservation, the belief that we need to take care of ourselves at any expense, at anyone's expense. This belief

keeps us locked into the material human concept of ourselves. It prevents us from seeing our spiritual being. The self we are preserving is not who we are; it's the human experience we're trying to stop identifying with.

Now is a good time to begin examining these conditionings, to see clearly how deeply entrenched they are, to understand how poorly they are serving us, and to pour them out.

The Causes of Suffering

Obviously, it's a very tall order to empty our teacup of all these things. The good news is that every time we give up a lie we can hear a new truth, and as we hear more truth, we are able to empty out more lies. It's progressive. We don't have to empty the teacup completely before we can begin putting new tea in. It's more like a glass full of muddy water. Every time we pour out some muddy water we can pour some clean water in, and all the water in the glass becomes clearer.

Finally, we are all probably quite willing to empty all the causes of human suffering out of our cup.

Patanjali, the author of the Yoga Sutras, lists five causes of human suffering: 1. Ignorance: ignorance of truth leaves us completely impotent. Jesus said, "Know the truth and the truth will set you free." "Know" is the operative word there. This chapter has been about emptying out our ignorance. 2. Egotism: the idea of that we are individual selves, separate from god and each other, needing to take care of ourselves, locks us into the human experience – is the human experience. 3. Attraction: being attracted to anything; desiring, trying to acquire and then hang on to things. This keeps us in the human experience because the things we are attracted to are material, not spiritual. Things are part of the human experience. 4. Aversion: the opposite side of the attraction coin, trying to avoid bad or painful things. 5. The fear of death: it's based in the belief that we are these human experiences rather than spiritual beings, and that we are therefore separate and finite.

Robert is more succinct. Robert says the cause of all suffering is the i-thought. The small 'i' indicates that the i-thought refers to the personal sense of self, not what we sometimes call the big I, the I AM. Everything perceived through the five senses is attached to the i-thought. Egotism, the idea that there is an 'i', is just a thought. It is this 'i' who is ignorant, attracted, aversive and afraid. If we eliminate the i-thought, the belief in 'i,' all five of Patanjali's causes are eliminated.

Joel says the cause of suffering is the belief in good and evil, the belief in more than one power, the belief that there are powers separate from god that can cause all this suffering. This belief in duality is the root cause of the human experience.

Barbara gave us a very useful tool: If we make a list of everything we love, hate, desire and fear, we wind up with a list of all the things that are tying us to our humanhood. Not too far from attraction, aversion, and fear of death.

II. The Three Levels of Human Consciousness

To understand what spiritual consciousness is, we need to survey the terrain of human consciousness and learn what spiritual consciousness *isn't*. We should begin by stating that consciousness does not really have different levels. Human beings have different levels of *awareness* of consciousness. When we talk about developing spiritual consciousness we really mean developing an awareness of the Consciousness that we have always been.

The human experience, in which we are all participating, conforms to certain laws. One is that everything starts in its simplest form. Oak trees start as acorns, plants start as seeds, birds start as eggs, animals start as fetuses, the universe itself started with a big bang, its solar systems started with exploding stars. Everything begins simple and matures.

This is also true of human consciousness, individual and collective. Collective, or universal, human consciousness is simply the aggregate of all the individual human consciousnesses. Life on earth began essentially unconscious. Gradually more advanced life types developed, exhibiting higher levels of consciousness. Eventually human beings arrived with self-consciousness.

Similarly, individual humans have, over a period of many lifetimes, gone through experiences which have slowly raised their level of consciousness, usually by using the time-tested technique of discovering, item by item, what doesn't work.

The expansion of human consciousness, from total ignorance to transcendence, is a continuum, but for our purposes we will identify and talk about three distinct phases of the process: material, mental and spiritual consciousness. We'll compare the concepts that define each level of consciousness with respect to matter, power, god, prayer, religion, supply, and healing.

Material Consciousness

Material consciousness is where human consciousness begins. The great majority of humanity still operates at this level. It's the long part of the path, beginning with little more than animal instincts.

Matter

A material consciousness sees matter as real, physical, external to itself (out there). To the early Greeks matter was made up of four elements, earth, water, fire and air. Later they threw in ether to contain the other four. The material concept of matter has grown more sophisticated over time. Now there are over 100 elements on the periodic chart. The scientific conception of these elements has changed from little hard particles flying around each other, to waves, to probability clouds, to something with characteristics of all of these. No doubt we'll move on, but what characterizes material consciousness is the belief that matter has an independent external reality governed by the laws of physics.

Power

In material consciousness, power is physical force. Human beings think in terms of overcoming, using more powerful forces to overcome lesser forces. We probably began with rocks, sticks and clubs. Spears overcame these. Then someone invented the bow and arrow

and was able to overcome the spear carriers. They, in turn, were overcome by guns. We moved on to cannons, then to bombs, with airplanes to deliver them, then atomic bombs, then hydrogen bombs. Each more powerful force was invented to overcome the previous power, usually to bring peace. We can take a look at the world today to see how effective this approach has been.

There are many things which have power in material consciousness: germs, viruses, drugs, weather, financial trends, politicians, armies, bullets and more. Human beings spend billions of dollars every year developing new, better powers to overcome them. The way human beings at the material level of consciousness try to get what they want, whether it's peace, prosperity or someone else's property, is to find a more powerful force.

God

The concepts of god, which we talked about emptying out in the previous chapter, are those held by material consciousnesses. Material concepts of god usually involve a more or less anthropomorphic being, with specific powers, which are effective in the material world. God, potentially, can give us something, remove something from us, or overcome something we think needs to be overcome. Gods at the material level of consciousness are usually just another step in the process of finding a greater power with which to overcome.

Prayer

And prayer, of course, is the attempt to use the god-power to get, remove or overcome whatever we find ourselves unhappy about. Materialistic prayers usually involve informing god of what we feel it has been overlooking or neglecting, and finding the right words or rituals to influence it to correct the situation.

This type of prayer implies certain characteristics of god that most prefer to ignore. A god that can be influenced to give something must be currently withholding it, a god that can be talked into removing something must be currently allowing it to remain, a god that could overcome something must be currently permitting it to be as it is, or that god must be unaware of those things.

Religion

Materialistic religions focus on intercession with a materialistic god. Most primitive and orthodox religions are materialistic.

Materialistic religions may involve idols, rites and ceremonies, and they usually have dogmas, doctrines and rules to be adhered to by the followers. They have priest classes to intercede with the god or gods for their members. They are often political and self serving. They often keep their members through promises of rewards and punishments to be awarded in the future.

Materialistic religions function as intermediaries between the worshippers and the worshipped. They seldom focus on raising the level of the members' consciousnesses or bringing the members to their own religious experience.

Supply

The material concept of supply is income and possessions, including jobs, dollars, stocks and bonds, real-estate, food and clothing. Material human consciousness believes supply comes from "out there" and is limited: what one has another can't have, and there's not enough for everybody. This leads to the very human concern with self-preservation, taking care of ourselves (often at the expense of others), getting ours before someone else gets it, being cleverer than the others, and competing with six billion other human beings for our supply – a very stressful way of life. Stress is a sure sign of material consciousness.

Healing

The material concept of healing is doctors, medications, surgeries and various other cures. Germs and viruses cause diseases; shots, vaccines and drugs cure them. It's about applying the power of medicine to overcome the power of disease. We apply our best medical solutions to our medical problems.

Two hundred years ago, medicine was ignorant and limited, doing all sorts of things considered wrong today, such as bleeding people to let out evil spirits. Now medicine is very sophisticated; the diagnostic equipment in this country is unsurpassed. Our capabilities are much greater. We now have very expensive drugs to treat almost everything. However, even with an increase in life expectancy, there is no significant reduction in the percentage of people who are sick. We've wiped out tuberculosis, and now have AIDS, wiped out polio and now have chronic fatigue syndrome, lupus, etc. New diseases continually arise, as well as new versions of old ones. The germs and viruses evolve to overcome the medicines that were invented to overcome them. The material approach to healing is just another attempt to overcome with material power.

So material consciousness deals with what it considers to be an external reality of material things. It is characterized by attempting to use material powers, gods, prayers and religions to overcome problems such as lack, limitation and disharmony.

Mental Consciousness

As human consciousness evolved people started using intelligence, and those with the more powerful force no longer always won. Strategy became involved. Sometimes a good intellect overcame a greater force. Intellect is also used in areas such as science, medicine and economics. But mental consciousness is not using the intellect to better apply material powers.

Mental consciousness began when people became aware of the power of mind. Mystery schools, which knew and taught how to use the power of the mind to control matter, existed in ancient Egypt and Greece. Also many primitive tribes knew a great deal about the use of mind, as demonstrated by their witch doctors, wizards, shamans, etc. Western civilization had lost most of the knowledge of mental power until places like the Duke Parapsychology Laboratory began to demonstrate that the mind can be used to move and control matter; it can, for example, roll dice in a particular way. This is the kindergarten level of what we're talking about.

The material level of consciousness is associated with matter and the laws of physics. The mental level of consciousness is associated with mind and the laws of metaphysics. The prefix "meta" means beyond, transcending, more comprehensive. Meta-physics means transcending physics, transcending the physical laws of matter and energy. The mental state of consciousness uses the power of mind to manifest, change or eliminate material things, according to the laws of metaphysics.

The metaphysical church movement began in the second half of the nineteenth century, when people like Mary Baker Eddy revealed and began to demonstrate the power of mind, especially the healing power. These people discovered that what we call the material world is contained within mind, and that mind controls matter. The metaphysical churches demonstrated that mind creates our experience of matter, and that mind can be used to transform matter. The Christian Science church, in Mrs. Eddy's time, had 3,000 congregations throughout the world, with 15,000 practitioners who used mental consciousness to heal all varieties of physical discords. The size and longevity of the metaphysical church movement testifies to the effectiveness of the power of mind.

One of Joel's students went within and asked, "What is this 'mind'?" The answer she received was, "You're looking at it!" It was saying that everything that we are aware of through our five senses is actually within mind. It was saying what we call space is mind. (Remember the discussion in the section on matter in the previous chapter, about my inability to prove to myself that anything is really out there, not just in my brain (mind).) We can think of mind as the "bubble" in which this human experience is taking place, not unlike the dream-bubbles created by our individual consciousnesses when we sleep. Just as material, tangible things appear in the mind-bubbles of our dreams, mental consciousness considers material, tangible things to be five-sense 'images' in mind, not "out there" like material consciousness believes.

For people who haven't encountered this way of thinking before, it can be very difficult. Mental consciousness sounds like nonsense to those who are still immersed in material consciousness. We'll look again at the seven topics we covered under material consciousness to give a clearer idea of mental consciousness.

Matter

Mental consciousness realizes that matter is formed by mind within itself (within the time and space bubble which it is). Matter is one form of mind; thoughts are another, like ice, water and steam are three forms of H_2O. Mind functions as thought; mind appears as matter. The content of mind is perceived by our five senses as matter. Metaphysics is the science that describes the nature of matter as mind, and the behavior of matter as conforming to thoughts and beliefs in mind. Mind is both the former and the substance of matter.

Power

To the mental level of consciousness, the only power is mind – the power of mind over matter. By learning to use the power of mind, matter can be created, altered or destroyed. For example, metaphysicians demonstrate the use of the power of mind to heal sickness. The thousands of healings brought about by practitioners in metaphysical churches prove

that germs, viruses, infections, etc. are not powers in the presence of a developed mental consciousness. If a person with the appearance of a disease comes to a metaphysical practitioner and the disease disappears, without the practitioner doing anything physical like laying on hands or giving medication, the power of mind over disease is demonstrated.

We see a good example of the power of mind over matter in our bodies, although we seldom stop to realize it. When we become afraid, our bodies get ready to fight or run. This appears as increased heart rate, blood pressure and adrenalin. Fear, the trigger for this change, is in the mind. The material functioning of the body has been altered by the mind.

One problem with material power is that whenever we apply a material force we may run into someone with a stronger force; a problem with mental power is that whenever we attempt to use mental power we may run into someone with a stronger mind, or a group with a stronger mind. We also must continually overcome the conditioned false beliefs of the 6 billion. The fact that so many share a common belief constantly exerts a level of mental power which will manifest those beliefs if it is unopposed.

God

In metaphysical churches, god is sometimes called "Divine Mind," the creator and sustainer of all that exists in mind. Of course, the application of both material and mental powers do not require a god. Mental healings, for example, are demonstrations of the power of mind, not of something spiritual.

Prayer

Affirmations, a common attempt to use mental power, might be considered as mental prayer. The idea is that affirming something, which isn't currently true in our experience, exerts mental power, which will cause it to become true. Having a positive attitude is an effective example of this. Visualizing abundance or good outcomes of future endeavors are other examples that work for some people.

Most prayer groups are really examples of mental prayer. Joel talks about a preacher who wrote a book on how to use prayer for good and evil. He had two identical collections of plants in identical situations. He had a group of people pray for one collection to be healthy and beautiful, and another group pray for the other plants to die. The plants that were being prayed for positively exhibited unusually good growth, and the others did die. Joel comments that the experiment accurately recorded reproducible results, but the results were misinterpreted. God certainly does not kill plants, part of Its own creation, at the whimsy of a group of people who pray. Prayer cannot be used destructively. The experiment did, however, demonstrate that the mental power generated by the "pray-ers" affected the plants. Their belief in the power of prayer was the effective agent, not god.

Another form of prayer in mental consciousness is called "treatment." Since it's usually associated with healing, we'll discuss it there.

Religion

The mental religions include most of what are called metaphysical religions, although some of them do rise into spiritual consciousness as well. These groups gained recognition because of the success of their healing activities.

There are numerous other examples of mental religions: Voodoo practitioners can kill or heal with their minds. Notice that Voodoo works best on people who believe Voodoo works. In Hawaii there were good Kahunas who could heal, and bad Kahunas who could curse and kill. Some witchcraft, wizardry and sorcery are based on mental power. Many of the primitive races knew much more about the mind than we do today. The aborigines in Australia could point a stick or a finger at people and kill them.

Healing

There has been a great deal of effective mental healing done by practitioners of several of the metaphysical churches. Practitioners often use the term "treatment" for the practice of directing mental power at the patient to bring about healings. A strong enough belief in harmony or wellness can overcome a weaker belief in disharmony. The great majority of humanity, at the material level of consciousness, believes that germs and viruses cause disease. Metaphysical practitioners who are strong enough can overcome the effect of that belief with their minds. It is similar to affirmations.

Using hypnosis is another example of mental healing. The power of the hypnotist's mind is used to affect the patient's body through the patient's mind. There are numerous studies of the ability to the human mind to control the body, stopping bleeding, for example, or controlling the pulse or even brain waves. Biofeedback is another tool that helps develop the power of the mind to control the body.

And, as we mentioned earlier, prayer groups work. The beliefs of a group of people in the power of their prayer to influence god constitute an effective mental power. The healing agent is the mental power generated by the believers, not the prayer. A large enough prayer group will have the same effect on its subject as the praying groups had on the plants. Other prayer groups, that don't really believe in the power of prayer, but hope that maybe it's worth a try, usually fail.

Psychosomatic healing is another example of mental healing. Also the successful use of placebos, sugar pills with no medicinal properties at all, which are sometimes given in place of drugs to patients who believe they do contain medicines, demonstrate the power of mind.

Supply

The mental concept of gaining supply is using mind to manifest material supply. Instead of trying to go out there and get material supply before others get it, the power of mind is used to create or attract it. Practitioners of the metaphysical religions may be called for help with things like supply or employment as well as healings. Affirmations are also used to manifest supply.

Observe that both material and mental consciousness involve using powers, and remember that one of the things we have to empty out before we can attain spiritual consciousness is the belief in more than one power.

In fact, material and mental consciousness are both human, rather than spiritual, levels of consciousness. A spiritual being who's having a human experience is a spiritual being that is now living at the material or mental level of consciousness. Part of the process of

rediscovering that we're spiritual beings is learning to recognize and rise above material and mental consciousness.

Spiritual Consciousness

People at the level of material consciousness are not yet aware that matter is within mind, and people at the level of mental consciousness are not yet aware that mind is within Consciousness. If mind is the bubble containing the material universe, Consciousness is what mind is a bubble in and what is aware of it.

Your dreams can give you a sense of this. When you dream at night, you're actually asleep in your bed, but you often appear be in your own dream. The you in your dream believes the dream is real; you see, hear, taste, touch and smell the things in your dream. The dream might be taking place in outer space; you could be in a space ship traveling across the universe; the entire universe is within your dream. The dream may have an apparent duration of several hours.

Then you wake up. Let's say we had an EEG wired up to your brain so we could measure its activity. The EEG would have recorded heightened brain activity for only 1 or 2 seconds. Yet, to the you in the dream, you appear to have been in the dream for several hours. The sense of time duration was created in your mind, presumably by your subconscious. And where is the vast space that was in your dream? The universe, the space ship and the others on the space ship were also created in your mind by your subconscious. The time and space in which the dream took place never existed anywhere except in your mind.

So we can talk about that dream time and space as taking place in mind within your subconscious. Your subconscious was outside of the dream, generating it, containing it and being aware of it, and when you woke up you were aware that you had dreamed, were now awake, and that the time and space in the dream never existed except in your mind.

Entering the level of spiritual consciousness means becoming aware of the Consciousness that contains the mind that contains the phenomenal universe, as your subconscious contained the dream that contained its content. We'll briefly go through the seven topics we used to explore material and mental consciousness, to give an indication of spiritual consciousness. The remaining chapters of this book will cover them in greater depth.

Matter

Matter in spiritual consciousness is the same as matter in mental consciousness. It's one form of mind and is contained within mind. The difference is that mind is now recognized as an instrument used by the consciousness containing it to form its creation. Mind is no longer thought to be creative; it forms the content of the consciousness governing it.

Power

In spiritual consciousness there is only one power, the power of the one Consciousness to create and sustain itself. One of Joel's most important principles is "one power, no power." Since the one Consciousness did not create any other powers, or anything else with powers, there is only the one power, and since there is only one power, there is nothing on which to use it. We do not need power. There is no more overcoming – there is nothing to overcome.

Religion

There really are no mystical religions, just mystical teachings which are different ways of pointing at the mystical experience. The mystical experience is the "religious" experience. It's an individual, private, personal experience. No one can have it for you. There's no need for a church, no need for ritual, no need for structure, no need for anyone to intercede for you. Either you're having it or you're not having it. The goal of any true mystical teaching is to lead you to have the experience yourself, thus freeing you from the teacher and the teaching. There is nothing to organize, and those who have had the mystical experience typically have no desire to organize anything.

God

God is the one Consciousness. Spirit, Consciousness and God are synonyms. In the mystical experience it is realized that all there is is Consciousness, Oneness. There is nothing else, no duality, just Consciousness expressing Itself as everything.

Prayer

In spiritual consciousness, prayer is replaced with a variety of spiritual practices, including meditation. Joel uses the word prayer to mean sitting silently, expectantly, awaiting conscious contact with spiritual being. He's very clear that it involves no words or thoughts. Others would call that meditation. Other spiritual practices include yoga, chanting, reading spiritual books, listening to spiritual tapes or CDs, sitting with higher consciousnesses and more. The purpose of all these practices is attaining the mystical experience.

Supply

Spiritual supply is the opposite of human (material or mental) supply. It's outflow rather than income, the outflow of the spiritual Oneness into manifestation in mind. In spiritual consciousness, supply refers to spiritual things, not material things. There are no material things, just images, mental concepts of spiritual things, manifested in mind. Jesus said it well when he told us to "take no thought" for material things, but rather to seek spiritual realization ("the kingdom of God") and all the material things will flow into our experience. Thus, supply is another word for the grace we experience as part of spiritual realization.

Healing

In spiritual consciousness, healing is essentially the *realization* that there is nothing to heal. If it's all God, all an expression of the one Consciousness, and the nature of that one Consciousness is perfection and harmony, what's to heal? If we aren't experiencing harmony, it's because we haven't yet risen in consciousness to the level where it becomes our experience. Going to a spiritual practitioner for the healing of an apparent difficulty amounts to asking for help in being lifted to the level of consciousness where the problem dissolves.

The most important thing to get from this chapter is some clarity on what we are *not* pointing at. We are not pointing at mental or material consciousness. Spiritual consciousness has nothing to do with getting or acquiring. It has nothing to do with overcoming or applying power. It has nothing to do with anything material or corporeal. It has nothing to do with anything in duality, especially any separate god that can be used. It

has nothing to do with anything we can think, understand or figure out. It *transcends* all of that. That's why it's also called transcendental consciousness.

III. WhatIs

Mystical truth has been revealed again and again throughout the last four thousand years. It's not a secret! It hasn't been recognized by orthodox religions, since orthodox religions are formed by those who don't understand, but it has been available in spiritual literature for millennia.

The *Vedas* record the realizations of some sages in India over 3,000 years ago. These sages independently had mystical experiences which were passed on orally. Later, the *Upanishads*, which are 18 much briefer expressions of the same truth, were appended to the *Vedas*. All of these works point to the identical truth.

Gautama the Buddha had his realization 2,500 years ago while sitting under the Bodhi tree meditating. His words were, "I am awake." His realization was of the same truth pointed to in the *Vedas* and *Upanishads*. At around the same time, Moses had the revelation which he expressed as, "I am that I am." Again, the same truth. Then some Old Testament prophets, and then Jesus, pointed to the same experience.

The *Ashtavakra Gita* is a wonderful poetic rendition of this truth. More recently we've had the ecstatic Islamic poets Rumi, Kabir and Hafiz, followed by a number of English mystical poets, writing of their experience of the same truth.

In the last 100 years, there have been the great sages of India, Ramana Maharshi, Osho, Nisargadatta Maharaj and Neem Karoli Baba, to mention only a few, who all shared the same experience, and of course they are all consistent with Western mystics such as Robert Adams and Joel Goldsmith. There are numerous books of all these masters' words, translated into English where necessary, available to anyone who is curious.

This book does not claim to be authoritative. There are no authorities in this work except yourself. It is an expression of one person's understanding, one pointing. Check out some of the works just mentioned. Find the masters who are speaking to you – you'll recognize them. Compare what they say. Perhaps this will help you empty out your teacup and begin to fill it with some truth pointers.

Since we are trying to empty out all our concepts of god, what follows points to the truth these mystics experienced without using "loaded" words like God, Father, Mother and Son that trigger conditioned concepts and that have different meanings for everyone.

All There is is Consciousness

The most succinct statement of the truth all these masters realized is, "All there is is Consciousness." This is the ultimate statement of Oneness. Everything is One and that One is Consciousness. Notice that it doesn't say *someone* or *something* is conscious of *anything*. Just Consciousness. The word consciousness is probably not loaded, since we don't really know what consciousness is. We know *that* it is, that we are conscious, but we have nothing we can say about consciousness as a thing, a concept. The Consciousness is the awareness that we are all individually experiencing right now, the awareness that we are aware.

The words “Consciousness” and “God” point at the same truth. Joel, recognizing that the word “God” was loaded, sometimes used “the Infinite Invisible,” since it’s difficult to have concepts about either of those words.

Another useful word that has few bad associations is “Spirit.” We don’t really have any idea what spirit is, but we generally agree it’s not body or mind. The least loaded expression I know for all there is is “what is” (WhatIs). WhatIs, Spirit, Consciousness, God, and Infinite Invisible are used synonymously in this book, many words that refer to the one ineffable truth about which we’re going to talk.

Now we can begin to explain why all concepts about God are false. Remember, every concept we have is within our own consciousness. If WhatIs is all of Consciousness, then all concepts are within WhatIs, and if WhatIs includes all concepts, then no concept can include all of WhatIs. Thus, a concept of God might be a limited description pointing at some aspect of WhatIs, but it certainly is not a concept of all that WhatIs is.

So we have a starting place, that there is Consciousness, the Consciousness we are using to read this book.

WhatIs is Expressed in Mind

We can also probably agree that there appears to be a creation of which we are conscious. If all there is is Consciousness, then creation must be a part of Consciousness: Consciousness expressed as the universe, including us. And, since Consciousness is incorporeal spirit, the universe and everything in it must also be incorporeal spirit. Everything must be made out of consciousness, since there’s nothing else, so everything has to be spiritual, not material. And perhaps we can also agree that there appears to be some sort of sustaining activity as creation continues to unfold.

Experiencing WhatIs requires time and space. For us to experience there needs to be a duration within which the experience takes place and there has to be space to contain the experienced objects.

In this book we will use the word “mind” to refer to the aspect of Consciousness which expresses creation, the aspect that includes time and space. The material level of consciousness believes creation is external, real matter, in a real space and time. The mental and spiritual levels have become aware that our experience of space, time and matter is taking place within mind.

“All there is is Consciousness” implies that Consciousness must be the creative principle. Consciousness is the only possible creator. But, since Consciousness contains mind as an aspect of itself, and mind creates time and space within itself, we have a problem with the idea of creation: creation seems to imply a particular time when creation occurred, and yet Consciousness, the “creator,” is outside of time. And the same problem applies to sustaining: sustaining means over time. WhatIs simply is, eternal, unchanging being. What we experience as creation is just a view of WhatIs in the time and space continuum of mind. Our experience of creation unfolding is because we are experiencing it in time. We are witnessing an unfolding of what WhatIs is over time.

The Nature of the Universe is Spiritual

The substance of everything is Consciousness because there is nothing else. WhatIs did not really create the universe. WhatIs is expressed *as* the universe. Man and the universe are a continuous unfolding of WhatIs expressing or revealing Itself throughout time and space. When we see creation as simply WhatIs, with its various eternal characteristics, we are beginning to understand Oneness.

The nature of anything is the nature of that from which it is made. A clay pot has, as its nature, the nature of clay; the nature of a wooden desk is wooden; a wooden bowl's nature is wooden; a wooden door's nature is wooden. The true nature of mind, and everything expressed within it, must be the same as the nature of WhatIs: consciousness.

WhatIs is Spirit; therefore all of creation is spiritual, and spirit is incorporeal, immaterial. There is no materiality in the universe, no matter, no bodies, since WhatIs's nature is pure Consciousness. And, if the nature of Consciousness is eternal harmony, peace and perfection, then the nature of all of creation must be eternal harmony, peace and perfection.

Also, there are no conditions such as good, bad, right, wrong, tall, short, beautiful, ugly, etc. in Consciousness. WhatIs is infinite, not limited. And expressing WhatIs in mind does not introduce conditions. Mind just forms the content of the consciousness governing it. It adds nothing. Humans subsequently add conditions to whatever they see, as we will discuss in the next chapter.

We can consider the projection of a movie onto a movie screen. The content of the film is what is projected. The projector adds nothing to the movie; it merely forms what's in the film on the screen. Whether the images on the screen are considered to be good or bad, happy or sad, is added by the viewer of the movie.

Similarly, none of the forms within mind is good, evil, right, or wrong. This may not be the way we are seeing it at this time, but it's a truth that must be accepted if we start at the top and proceed downward logically, as we have just done.

Lao Tzu said, "He who knows, says not; he who says, knows not." Now we're beginning to see what he meant. WhatIs is indescribable. But we can talk *about* it; we can point at it, like the finger pointing at the moon. The problem is that we are used to functioning as human beings, physical bodies with five material senses and a finite mind. These bodies are part of the creation within mind, and these five senses can't perceive anything, which is not within mind.

Also a limited, finite brain, thinking sequentially in time, cannot comprehend infinity. This, of course, is the reason we implored you in the beginning not to get your intellect involved. The intellect is the wrong tool. This is something that has to be experienced by the spiritual being that is having the human experience.

Next we'll try to expand our understanding by pointing at some aspects of the nature of WhatIs.

WhatIs is Eternal Harmony

We have seen that one function of Consciousness is the expression of Itself in time and space, that Consciousness, containing this expression of Itself in mind as part of Itself, is outside of mind, and that mind contains time. So WhatIs is outside of time. This is the true meaning of "eternal." Eternal doesn't mean an infinitely long stretch of time that had no starting point and will have no ending point. Eternal means transcending time. Time is one of the constructions of mind; WhatIs, including mind, is eternal.

Now is another word for eternal. Now is always here, eternally here. Now is when WhatIs is. Now is not a part of time. We have been conditioned to think of the future approaching us, becoming now, and then receding into the past. Looking at it that way, now seems to be part of time. But another way of seeing it is that right now it's now…, and it's still now…, and it's still now…, it's always now…, eternally now. There's no such thing as the future – just thoughts in mind, now, about something that hasn't happened. And there's no such thing as the past – just thoughts in mind, now, labeled memories, about something that we say has happened.

The first principle of Joel's Infinite Way® teaching is "is," God is. He commented that God is is-ing; God is not was-ing, and never was was-ing; and God is not will-ing, and never will be will-ing. I like "Is is is-ing." That says there is only one presence, being now. It makes all ideas such as WhatIs doing something in the future that It is not doing now, or ceasing something in the future that It is doing now, nonsense, because those are timely considerations and WhatIs is not in time.

Another characteristic of WhatIs is harmony. We think of harmony as everyone or everything getting along together, but if we consider everything as aspects of WhatIs, coexisting eternally, outside of time, we get a whole new glimpse of what harmony really means.

Omniscience, Omnipresence & Omnipotence

Omniscience (allknowingness, infinite intelligence), omnipresence (everywhere, always present) and omnipotence (all powerful, the only power) are three more words that are frequently used to describe aspects of WhatIs.

Orthodox religions constantly talk about god being omniscient, omnipresent and omnipotent, but they don't really believe it. They pray to god to overcome other powers, like disease, which means they don't believe god is omnipotent, and they inform god of things in their prayers, which means they don't believe that god is omniscient and omnipresent. Metaphysical religions also show they don't really believe in omnipotence, as they attempt to use the power of "divine mind" to overcome the material powers in "carnal mind" or "mortal mind."

Viewed mystically, however, these words make perfect sense. Since WhatIs is Consciousness, *the* Consciousness, and everything that is is one with WhatIs, is part of and within Consciousness, then omniscience simply means that Consciousness is conscious of all of Itself – Self-conscious, and It couldn't not be!

Omnipresence has almost the same meaning: since everything is contained in WhatIs, then WhatIs is clearly everywhere, whatever everywhere means outside of space and time. "Here" means where I am conscious. There is nowhere that is not here in WhatIs.

Omnipotence is also trivial. Being all there is, WhatIs is obviously the only power, although we might ponder what power means where there is no time in which to exert it, no where to exert it and nothing to exert it upon.

Our current prayer practice may be completely eliminated when we think in terms of praying to an omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent being. There's nothing WhatIs doesn't know, so nothing to tell It; nothing It isn't doing, so nothing to ask for; nothing outside of It, so nothing for it to overcome; and no time existing in which It could initiate, change or terminate anything.

Omniscience, omnipresence and omnipotence might become clearer if you look at your own dreams again. According to the material story, you're lying in bed, you have a brain inside your skull, and your consciousness and subconsciousness are functions of your brain. Your subconscious needs to express itself while you're asleep, so you have a dream, a mind-bubble, so to speak, within your own consciousness, in which time and space are created. The space inside your dream is dream space that isn't really anywhere; when you wake up it never was. The time which elapsed in your dream, within the second or so that you were dreaming, may have seemed to have been several hours. When you wake up, that time never was. Time and space were created by your subconscious along with the dream.

What went on in your dream was precisely what you, the dreamer, were aware of. Anything that you were not conscious of was not in the dream, didn't exist. In other words, you, the dreamer, were everywhere in the dream, omnipresent, and knew everything that happened in the dream, omniscient, because it was in your consciousness – you were conscious of it. And omnipotence becomes clear here too, because, although all the people who appear to the you in your dream act as if they are autonomous, doing their own thing, making their own decisions, causing you grief, exercising free will, *you* are dreaming it. It's your subconscious that's generating the whole thing; everything in the bubble of your dream is an effect of your subconsciousness. No one and no thing within the dream, including the you in the dream, really has any independent power to do anything. Everyone, including the you in your dream, does what your subconscious is expressing. Your subconscious is omnipotent.

Law

There also appear to be laws that define the behavior of the expression of WhatIs in time and space, which we see reflected as the way the universe works, the way the galaxies, solar systems and planets move, the way gravity always attracts, the way roses always grow on rose bushes, and apples on apple trees. All the laws of mathematics and science are also part of WhatIs's expression. The laws of arithmetic and geometry are eternal, immutable, whether they have been discovered by mankind or not. The laws of physics, such as $e=mc^2$, have always been true, although many of them were unknown until recently, as well as the laws of engineering, aerodynamics and architecture, for example. Also the principles of art, music and all creativity are eternal. We don't really invent or create things; we discover or realize, and then express them.

These laws are evidence of the infinite Intelligence that weaves itself as this tapestry we call the universe. Humans cannot change these laws. No amount of mental effort can vary the tides one second, or bring the sun up a moment earlier. Humans can only affect what humans have created in mind. Laws that cannot be influenced, even through spiritual consciousness, are reflections of a corresponding law in WhatIs.

These laws are expressed absolutely, immutably, impartially, impersonally. They are simply more aspects of WhatIs being reflected in time. They can be totally relied on, and they result in the eternal, perfect harmony that, when realized by humans, feels like love.

WhatIs is Consciousness; Law is an aspect of WhatIs; Harmony and Love are effects of Law.

WhatIs is Expressed as Impersonal Individual Consciousness

Joel's second principle is that God is expressed *as* impersonal individual consciousnesses. This statement is consistent with our axiom that all there is is Consciousness. WhatIs is expressed as an infinity of individual beings, individual consciousnesses. WhatIs is the same consciousness that is the individual consciousness of everything that exists. Creation is an infinitely complex, infinitely varied, expression of WhatIs in mind, at all levels of awareness, from what appears to us to be no awareness at all, in inanimate objects like boulders, to responsiveness in plants, to instincts in animals, to self-awareness in some higher animals, to the ability to create (imagine or dream) in mind in humans.

The "impersonal" in Joel's principle, with respect to us spiritual beings having human experiences, means that WhatIs is expressed as the spiritual beings we really are. Personality is part of the human experience, not the spiritual being. The spiritual being remains constant throughout all the lives it experiences.

This says we are all expressions of WhatIs. WhatIs is you. WhatIs is me. WhatIs is everyone, and It's the real us, the spiritual beings. WhatIs is the only I there is. And, WhatIs's expression of Itself as us is not affected by the concepts we, as human experiences, have about ourselves and materiality, based on our five senses, or by any other conditions or limitations we impose upon ourselves because we choose to think of ourselves as human beings. These affect our own experience of ourselves in mind, but have no impact whatsoever on the spiritual beings we are as part of WhatIs's spiritual creation.

We seem to be introducing a distinction here between what is "real" and what we experience. Robert always used the word "real" to mean eternal and unchanging. He considered everything impermanent or transitory to be "unreal." We might understand his use of "real" as referring to what is outside of mind, and unreal to what is within mind. As we will see in the next chapter, we use many words such as dream, leela, maya and hypnotism to refer to what Robert termed unreal.

It's reminiscent of Plato's ideals. Plato envisioned a higher reality than the one we experience, which contained such things as mathematical, geometrical and scientific truths, as well as ideals for the forms of everything else we see. We are able to get in touch with (realize, discern) this higher reality in moments of inspiration (artistic, poetic, scientific, musical, etc.) and bring forth five-sense concepts of them, which we can then demonstrate

as material objects such as paintings, sculptures, architecture, novels, inventions, symphonies, discoveries, etc.

Oneness

All there is is Consciousness, one Consciousness. WhatIs is non-dual, not two. I'm conscious, you're conscious, she's conscious, he's conscious, but we don't have separate consciousnesses. We are individual expressions of the one Consciousness.

Similarly, I'm alive, you're alive, trees are alive, bugs are alive. We are conditioned to think of my life, your life and its life, but there's only one Life that is expressed as individual lives. Each branch, each leaf, of a tree is alive, but it does not have a separate life. They all share in the life of the tree. And now we add that the tree's life is an individual expression of the one Life. Life is actually just a name we apply to one aspect of the one Consciousness, as it expresses individually.

Also, there is only one Mind, another aspect of the one Consciousness. We think of my mind and your mind, but there's just one Mind, which we all partake in, which we are all experiencing, and are influencing and being influenced by individually. Not only are there not individual minds, there is also not a human mind. This is just a label humans have come up with for the beliefs entertained in consciousness by the human experiences.

Barbara used the metaphor of a diamond. Consider a diamond with many facets. The diamond represents WhatIs; the diamond is all there is. Each facet represents an individual expression of WhatIs. Each facet is a particular individual facet, but it is an integral part of the diamond. The diamond has lots of characteristics, which are also the characteristics of each facet. The diamond is carbon in a crystalline structure, and so is each facet. In fact, the carbon, crystalline nature of the facet is a complete expression of that aspect of the nature of the diamond. The entire carbon-ness of the diamond is completely present in each facet. Perhaps we can think of carbon as the substance of the diamond, which also includes being the substance of each facet.

Another aspect of the diamond is its color, maybe blue-white. Each facet is also blue-white, not a part of the blue-white, or a little blue-white, just blue-white. Similarly, each facet is exactly as hard as the diamond, and the diamond is as hard as the facets.

So every aspect of the nature of the diamond is expressed fully in each facet of the diamond. Now let the diamond be infinitely large, with an infinite number of facets of an infinite number of sizes and shapes, and perhaps we have a useful metaphor.

WhatIs is I Am

WhatIs's expression is my consciousness, my awareness. It's not my body, one of the things of which I am humanly aware, and not my mind, of which I am also humanly aware. My body and mind are not the spiritual being that I am. In this human experience I *have* a body and I *have* a mind. The individual expression of Consciousness that I am, is my consciousness, my sense of self, my sense of "I am," this awareness, which I am aware of here and now, and which has been constant throughout my life.

My sense of "I am," which is simply a statement that I am experiencing awareness, is an individual expression of WhatIs knowing that It is. There is only one I am expressed, one

Consciousness expressed, as there is only one Life expressed. The consciousness that I am aware of and with is the same consciousness that you are aware of and with. Only the content differs.

Thus, any time I want to be aware of the presence of WhatIs, I need only be aware that I am – aware that I'm aware and that that awareness is WhatIs.

WhatIs is Present Where WhatIs is Realized

As a final note to this chapter and a lead-in to the next chapter, we'll observe this self-evident statement: Whatever is in my individual consciousness is what I'm conscious of, aware of, and experiencing; whatever I'm not conscious of, I'm not experiencing. So, the extent to which I am aware of WhatIs is the extent to which WhatIs is expressed in my personal experience. If all I'm conscious of is my own limited five-sense concepts of myself and the world, then that's my experience. To the extent that I am conscious of What (really) Is, that' s what I experience.

So, if I want my experience to include more of the characteristics of WhatIs, I need to become more aware of WhatIs. I experience the harmony that is the nature of WhatIs to the extent that I'm aware of the presence of WhatIs as my life.

IV. What Appears to Be

The fundamental principle of spiritual consciousness is "All there is is Consciousness." An important part of this principle is what isn't said: it doesn't say that there is some *one* that is conscious of some *thing*; there is just Consciousness, self-contained pure Awareness.

Another principle is that Consciousness is expressed as individual beings, having the full spectrum of Consciousness from very little in rocks to self-awareness in humans. We experience this expression as "creation" within mind. Creation is not something separate from Consciousness; it's an aspect of Consciousness. Being transcendent of time, Consciousness and all its aspects, including mind, are eternal and harmonious.

WhatIs's expression in mind is spiritual (there is nothing other than spirit) and must also be harmonious since that is WhatIs's nature. Mind, governed by Consciousness, generates eternal, harmonious forms in space, unfolding in time. These might be thought of as corresponding to Plato's ideals.

The impersonal, individual expressions having human experiences are spiritual, eternal and harmonious expressions in mind, in space and time. But their experiences may be variable and sometimes discordant. Since humans are also creative, mind also forms the content of their individual consciousnesses.

Consciousness is Expressed in Mind

As we mentioned previously, time and space are required to experience creation. Mind is the word we use to point to the aspect of Consciousness which *forms* the content of Consciousness in time and space.

One of Joel's students went within and asked, "What is mind?" The answer she heard was, "You're looking at it!" What we call space is mind, the space between everything is mind, the space between stars and planets is mind, the space between atoms and between sub-atomic particles is mind. Mind is the substratum of what we call the universe, which we think of as space or vacuum.

To visualize this, we can look again at dreams. Someone might have a dream filled with people, rocks, stars, oceans, any sort of thing, yet all these things are expressions of the dreamer's consciousness, within the dreamer's consciousness. It's a self-contained dream, consciousness containing consciousness; there's no substance to it, nothing to it except consciousness. Everything in the dream is consciousness: the matter is consciousness, the colors are consciousness, the smells are consciousness, the hardness or softness of things is consciousness; it's all consciousness, a dream. And the dream, the creation of the dreamer's subconsciousness, appears to be experienced by the beings within the dream, usually including a form with which the dreamer becomes identified. We can talk about different aspects of the dream, different things in it, different happenings in it, but it's all just a dream, an expression of consciousness, a functioning of consciousness, created out of consciousness, that has no external existence.

We can think of Creation as Consciousness's dream, formed by an aspect of Itself which we are calling mind. Creation is experienced within mind by the individual consciousnesses that appear in it, as our dreams appear to be experienced by those within the dream.

There is only one mind, the faculty of Consciousness which forms Its content in time and space. We, the spiritual beings playing the game of having human experiences, also participate in mind: it forms, for us, the content of our *individual* consciousness, as our individual human experience.

Leela

One of the laws of creation revealed to Barbara is this: everything is born asleep. Everything begins in its most rudimentary form. In the case of individual consciousnesses, that means ignorant. If we look at the history of humanity, that's the story we see: we've spent 100,000 years rising from primitive man to whatever we are today. In fact, what we are observing as the progress of mankind is the progress of all the individual human consciousnesses on the path from the animal level to the transcendental level.

Leela is a Sanskrit word meaning "the play of the gods." We can think of a theater, which is an expression of WhatIs, and some scenery, another expression of WhatIs, and some actresses and actors, more expressions, acting out their roles, which are part of the play, written by WhatIs.

The theater is mind. The actors and actresses are the spiritual beings; their roles are the human experiences, with human senses and the human belief in good and evil. The scenery is materiality, and the script is about each of the characters growing from the state of ignorance to the state of transcendental consciousness. The actors and actresses, individually, may remember that they are acting out a role, or, as is usually the case, they may have become so immersed in their roles that they have forgotten it's just a play.

It can be a useful tool for us to think of this human experience as a play. This is not really me; it's the role I'm acting out right now, and what I think of as you is actually just the role you're acting out. We're all performing our roles in the leela. My role is expressing this particular level of consciousness, and yours is expressing that level. And you are obviously the best there is at playing your role. The play is about our individual consciousnesses growing from ignorance to transcendence. Each scene is about the experiences we have to deal with as mind forms the content of our current states of consciousness.

My experience in the leela is harmonious when I remember that I am an actor, that you are an actor or actress, and that what's happening in this scene of the drama is the parts we're playing, not who we are. After the play is over, the players do not try to get even with each other for what transpired on stage. They know they were simply performing their parts, and that the success of the play depended on how well they performed them.

The Nature of the Universe is Perceptual

Everything we experience is in mind. If you recall my dilemma concerning proving that there is anything "out there" (real), I had observed that everything I perceived was made up in some way from neurons firing in my brain, but I couldn't explain where the images came from. Now we can go a step further. Everything in mind is made of the substance of mind. We might call it imagination, since we can create images in our minds simply by using our imagination. So in this sense, at least, the universe is imaginary. We are perceiving the universe in mind.

Mind works like a mirror. A mirror instantaneously reflects exactly what is in front of it. When governed by Consciousness mind expresses the content of Consciousness, the spiritual Creation. As spiritual beings, expressions of WhatIs in the spiritual universe, we also demonstrate a form of creativity. Mind forms the content of our individual consciousnesses when governed by them. Our concepts, the content of our consciousness, are reflected to us immediately and precisely by mind. What we experience are our *concepts* of Creation. We, as human experiences, are forms within mind, experiencing ourselves and other forms within mind. We experience ourselves as having five senses, so our concepts of creation are in terms of our five senses, Therefore we experience creation as being material. This is what "matter is one form of mind" means.

Our concepts are determined by our current conditioning, which usually reflects our age, sex, race, nationality, education, economic situation, etc. This same conditioning determines our experiences at a movie. Some of us laugh, some cry, some worry, some are delighted and others offended, all by the identical movie. The level of our concepts is determined by the extent of our association with the universal human belief in a multitude of powers that produce good and evil, health and disease, and these concepts are reflected in mind. To the extent that we are not accepting the false beliefs in human consciousness and are discerning the truth about what really is, that becomes the content of our individual consciousnesses governing mind, and we have experiences reflecting peace and harmony. A spiritual consciousness is one which has transcended the beliefs in human consciousness. In proportion as we have transcended the human beliefs, we are able to see that WhatIs has the nature of harmony, eternality, immortality.

Let's extend the diamond metaphor. WhatIs is the diamond, and Its impersonal individual expressions are the facets, representing our spiritual beings. The human experiences might be compared to believing we're separate, outside of the diamond, viewing WhatIs by looking in through our individual facets (impossible, of course, except in our false beliefs). The clarity of the facet corresponds to the clarity of the content of our individual consciousnesses. To the extent that we are conditioned by human beliefs, there is dust on our facet, obscuring our view of WhatIs. This is the "seeing through a glass darkly" state, the dust on the Zen mirror. Notice that the dust does not change the diamond, just our view of it. As we drop our conditioning our facets become clearer, and we are able to see (and experience) more of What really Is.

Everything in Mind is Effect

Mind can be used by practitioners of mental science as a creative (or destructive) tool. Mind will reflect a sufficiently strong belief (or intent) in an individual consciousness to that individual, and to others who have associated themselves with that individual consciousness. This is the way mind is used for mental healing, as well as by aborigines to kill. This practice is of human consciousness and, if anything, it hinders achieving transcendental consciousness.

Mind, correctly used, is an instrument of awareness; it's the instrument that we use to become aware of WhatIs. Along the way, it shows us what we currently believe, not what we know with our intellects, but what we are conditioned to believe deep down..

By now we can see that everything in mind is an effect of the consciousness governing it. Nothing that mind forms can be a cause. It's effect, like the image in the mirror is an effect of what's in front of it. None of the images in the mirror can initiate anything. They're reflections of something outside of the mirror.

The cause for mind is the consciousness governing it. When WhatIs is the cause, mind generates harmonious effects. When human consciousness is the cause, the effects are sometimes good sometimes bad. Either we're aligned with our spiritual being and our individual consciousness is filled with the realization of the nature of WhatIs, or we're aligned with human consciousness and our individual consciousness is filled with dualistic concepts. And we experience what our individual consciousness contains. We can either have an experience reflecting the harmony of WhatIs or the dualism of human consciousness.

This is the bottom line about what appears to be. There are not any powers of good or evil out there which are manipulating us or causing anything to happen to us. What's out there is the effect of our consciousness being formed as our experience, *literally*. There is nothing out there but effect. It's easy to say, but it is really difficult to get this at a level that will transform our lives. *There is nothing out there but effect*, the reflection of our concepts, our beliefs being formed within mind, just as in a dream there is nothing but effects of the subconsciousness of the dreamer being formed as the dream. It's all effect; It's all illusion; It's all maya; It's all the leela.

Thoughts

We said earlier that matter is one form of mind and thoughts are another. Thoughts are within mind. This means that thoughts, too, are effects. Nothing in mind is a source. The source is what is governing the mind – consciousness. Everything within mind is effect.

Really getting this is a huge step forward. It eliminates the possibility that thinking about anything can change anything. Thoughts are effects of the consciousness governing mind; actions are effects of the consciousness governing mind; so thoughts can't be cause for actions that follow. We sometimes see this when we carefully reach a decision about something, but then when the time comes, we find ourselves taking a different action.

Just as it's true that worrying about something isn't preparation, thinking about it isn't preparation either.

Universal Human Belief

In order to understand why it is that what appears to be appears the way it does we need to take a closer look at human consciousness. Actually, "human consciousness" is not a correct expression. There's only one consciousness and it's not human, it's *the* Consciousness. When we say human consciousness, we're talking about human beliefs.

Humans believe in powers other than WhatIs, and that these powers have effects. Humans believe that germs and viruses have the power to cause disease, that medications have the power to heal physical or mental problems, that there are economic laws that can cause lack, and that we're separate, independent, and on our own. Humans also believe in all the dualities, the conditions such as right and wrong, good and bad, beautiful and ugly, i.e., all

the conditions that are different from the nature of WhatIs. By "human consciousness" we mean all the beliefs humans have in powers and conditions other than WhatIs, so we'll use the term "universal human belief" from here on.

All of the powers in universal human belief are mental or physical powers which have the potential of being used for good or evil, of being used to create harmony or discord (within the Leela). Electricity brings light and can be used for executions; medicines can cure or kill. When we get into mental powers, there's good Kahunas and bad Kahunas.

According to the Bible, we were kicked out of the Garden of Eden because we ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The belief in good and evil was introduced and paradise was lost. Suddenly there were concepts that could cause discomfort, suddenly there were all the dualities, suddenly there were lack and limitation, and suddenly there was human suffering. Patanjali's five causes of suffering: ignorance, ego, aversion, attraction and the fear of death, arose as a direct result of the belief in powers other than WhatIs. In other words, universal human beliefs lead to suffering. Being human means that we are playing a role in the leela that believes that the effects, in mind, are powers and therefore we experience suffering as these beliefs are reflected to us.

Universal human belief is not a real entity. It has no being, no center, no self. It's just the beliefs themselves being projected and received within mind by individual human consciousnesses. It's as if each of us had a radio receiver and transmitter built into us, and they're always turned on. To the extent that we're immersed in the human experience we're tuned into the universal human belief wavelength, and we're receiving all the human beliefs. We're usually unaware of this because the broadcast enters our subconscious subliminally. We receive the broadcast, accept the parts that are consistent with our current level of awareness, and rebroadcast them. We not only rebroadcast them, we also manifest them in mind, since they are now part of our consciousness.

There's no one in universal human belief deciding what or to whom to broadcast. There are just the beliefs themselves being broadcast, received and rebroadcast, thus sustaining themselves. I get my belief reinforced by my receiver and rebroadcast it; the rebroadcast reinforces someone else's beliefs and they rebroadcast. There is nothing more to it than the transmitting and receiving of the human beliefs, which is self-sustaining in mind.

Also, universal human belief has no targets. It's completely impersonal. Humans respond to what's appropriate for their current level of awareness, but the broadcasting is universal. And it has no power. These beliefs can't force us to accept them. They just offer themselves as temptations to believe the leela we are watching. And, there is nothing sustaining the beliefs except the beliefs themselves. They are not true. No laws uphold them. They are a nothingness. Just potential dust on our facets, if we let them in.

The World is a State of Hypnotism.

Again, WhatIs is Consciousness, infinite Consciousness. Man and the universe is this Consciousness formed, expressed. And therefore, since Consciousness is incorporeal spirit, man and the universe are incorporeal spirit. Since we can't see Consciousness with our eyes, can't see spirit, we are not seeing the spiritual man and spiritual universe that is the

expression of WhatIs. We have never seen a tree; we have never seen a flower, as it really is.

All we can see with our eyes is our finite, five-sense concepts of creation, formed in mind, based on universal human beliefs. So we see concepts that are sometimes good, sometimes bad, sometimes young, sometimes old, sometimes sick, sometimes well, sometimes alive, sometimes dead. But we must remember that these are not WhatIs; these are our *concepts* of Creation, human, material concepts. When we look at each other, we don't see each other, we see the concepts of each other that we have formed in our minds, and everyone sees something different, as our concepts differ.

Joel liked to use the word "hypnotism." This world is a state of hypnosis. When people are hypnotized, they see, hear, taste, touch and smell whatever the hypnotist has put in their mind. A hypnotist can convince a subject that there is a white poodle in the room, and he or she will see the white poodle, talk to it, pet it, maybe even worry about what to do with it. Of course, no one else sees the white poodle. It doesn't exist. But the hypnotized person sees it. The hypnotist has used mental power to make the subject believe in the white poodle, and the subject's mind forms it as her or his experience. The fact that no one else sees it demonstrates that we each experience the content of our individual belief system.

The mental power of the over six billion people broadcasting human beliefs is hypnotizing; we become hypnotized, and as we accept the beliefs our minds form them as our experience.

Now, what is the substance of the white poodle? Hypnotism! There is no white poodle, just an image formed in mind by the belief of the one hypnotized. Similarly, the substance of everything we perceive with our five senses is hypnotism. We never see, hear, taste, touch or smell anything but forms of hypnotism.

For example, enough humans believe in the power of the flu virus that it causes the appearance of flu. They are radiating this belief into human consciousness. Those of us who believe in the power of germs and viruses, respond to it, believe it, are hypnotized by it, rebroadcast it for others to pick up, and it becomes possible for us to come down with flu. Those of us who no longer believe in the power of the flu virus don't respond to the suggestion, and don't catch flu.

Human experience at the material or mental level of awareness is just beliefs being transmitted, received, reinforced and formed in mind. The beliefs that hypnotize us are the ones that reflect our own level of awareness. The ones we don't react to, others at different levels of awareness will.

Most humans are unaware of the universal human beliefs being radiated at them hypnotically, yet they are susceptible to them if they don't *know* (as part of their consciousness, not part of their intellect) that these beliefs are lies. The radiated beliefs become part of their consciousness and thus determine their experience. When we understand how mind and human belief work, know the truth, and recognize the lies, then we can no longer be hypnotized by them. We have raised the level of our consciousness.

The point is that every appearance of error has to be hypnosis. It can't be real because the nature of what's real is eternal harmony and perfection. Disharmony is the out-picturing of the false beliefs in human consciousness. There is no such thing as disease, death, lack or

unemployment. To the extent that we see such things, we are hypnotized. This is what Joel meant when he said that since the beginning of time not a single person has been sick or died. When we become de-hypnotized we will see the true nature of things more clearly.

Error Cannot Exist

Joel used the work "error" to mean any of the disharmonies in human experience such as disease, death, lack, limitation, inadequacies, etc. If WhatIs is all there is, then for error to exist WhatIs would have to be expressed as it. This really means error would have to be an aspect of WhatIs. But WhatIs cannot contain anything in conflict with Itself and be eternal, unchanging harmony and perfection. There can't be anything destructive in It or It would not be eternal.

So there can't be error in the One Reality. Then what is error? Everything that we call error or evil is hypnosis, the universal human beliefs in error being formed within mind. These beliefs in error and evil are lies, and they're intrinsically impotent – they have no power unless we accept them. But if we do, they out-picture in our individual experience.

A lie has no power unless it's believed. False beliefs that are accepted, manifest; those that are recognized as a lie, don't. We might know (have realized) that the flu virus is impotent, but still fear cancer. So we would never catch flu, but we could contract cancer. Our work is to recognize all the lies, know what the corresponding truth is, and replace the lies with the truth. Then the picture changes.

Good and Evil are Impersonal

Since what we call evil is nothing more than the universal belief in more than one power expressing itself wherever a mind responds to it, it follows that people who apparently perpetrate evil acts are not evil. They are, in fact, spiritual beings, expressions of WhatIs. But in the leela, in the roles they are playing, they are at a level of awareness receptive to certain universal human beliefs, and are hypnotized into doing the things we call evil. There is no such thing as an evil person, just one ignorantly available. There are actions we label evil, and there are universal human beliefs we call evil, but it's never part of an individual. The person is simply hypnotized. This was the premise upon which Joel was able to accomplish such amazing healings; he separated the error from the individual, making it easier to lift that individual above it.

We experience our concepts of Creation as individual beings. Our experience reflects those concepts in universal human belief that we accept. We experience finite, dualistic, conditioned concepts, and the experience can be harmonious or erroneous based on those concepts.

We give power to evil not only by believing in it, but also by fighting it. Resisting evil shows that we believe it has power. We are sustaining the evil by resisting it.

Good behavior is just as impersonal as evil behavior is. A person approaching transcendental consciousness may appear to be good, but that too is not the person. The good is the expression of WhatIs's nature of infinite perfection and harmony through the individual. What we call good from a seemingly good person is the reflection of a higher awareness. But if we label it good that's just another concept. Good behavior is just as much

a concept, in the leela, in this dream, as evil behavior is. There's no difference. They're just human concepts.

It's all just the out-picturing of our beliefs. We're seeing what we believe. When we see disease, we're really seeing our belief in disease; when we see poverty, we're seeing our belief in poverty; when we see man's inhumanity to man, we're seeing our belief in man's inhumanity. When we see error, we're *not* seeing a belief that all there is is WhatIs, that all there is is this one eternal, harmonious, blissful, experience that the mystics all report. When we are dehypnotized, we'll see things in their true light. We'll be using mind as an instrument for having an experience more like WhatIs.

I am

We are spiritual beings, spiritual creations, spiritual expressions, not material or corporeal. But we see finite concepts of WhatIs, consistent with the finite senses that we believe we have. Universal human belief believes that we are bodies and minds, but bodies and minds are not part of our spiritual beings. They are part of the human experience in mind.

Most of us, when we say, "I am," are talking about our body and our mind, but that's not who we are. "I am" is really the impersonal, individual expression of Consciousness that I am. The I that I am today, and the I that I was 25 years ago, are identical. My body was younger then, in fact *every* cell in my body was different; the content of my mind was different, almost every idea, thought and belief that I had then is no longer part of me. Essentially nothing that was there then is here now. Yet I *know* that who I was then and who I am now are the same person, and when I was 20 that was also me, and when I was five, still the same me. When I consider it I realize that I have always really known deep inside myself that there is something other than my body and mind that is really me. The I that I really am, that has been constant throughout my entire life, is my consciousness, my awareness that I am. What appears to be a personal body and personal mind is changing, but who I am is the I that is aware of this body and mind, the I that I have always been, that I was before I took this body, and that I will be after I leave this body. That I is the awareness, the consciousness that is the expression of WhatIs.

V. The Human Condition

The human condition is dual: we are spiritual beings having human experiences. Spiritual being means an eternal, infinite being whose nature is consciousness, harmony and perfection, i.e., an impersonal, individual expression of WhatIs.

Having a human experience means believing we are these physical body/minds, separate from WhatIs, "independent entities" experiencing a "real world" that is "out there" through our five senses. It means having a level of awareness which is material or mental.

The leela is about expanding our awareness of WhatIs beyond the illusion of the human experience to the reality of our spiritual being. We have been having human experiences for millennia. Lifetime after lifetime we are born into different body/minds. We bring with us what Barbara called our karmic bank, which essentially contains our current state of awareness, all the spiritual truths we have mastered and all the material and mental lies we still believe in. Our karmic bank also contains the complete record of all our previous lives.

Our role in this scene of the leela is determined by how far we have progressed. We come into this lifetime with the ideal parents, sex, race, nationality, religion, etc. to facilitate mastering our next spiritual lesson. The leela is really a spiritual university with infinite patience. A lesson (problem, difficulty) is presented to us to master. If we deal with it at the level of the problem, i.e., humanly, by trying to find a way to overcome it, we flunk that lesson, but no matter, it will be presented again in a different form, perhaps in our next lifetime if it killed us this time. If we rise above the level of the problem by recognizing the false belief in our individual consciousness that permits this problem to be in our experience and learn (realize) the correct spiritual truth relating to the situation, the problem dissolves; we have moved up and will never have to deal with that problem again.

We have finally arrived at the level at which we are attending school consciously (or we wouldn't be reading this book). We can now actively pursue learning the truths which will permit us to master our next lessons, rather that discovering them by trial and error, through suffering.

Three Levels of Human Consciousness

We have talked about the three levels of human consciousness, material, mental and spiritual or transcendental. We've also mentioned three levels of personal sense that we can become aware of, three levels of meaning for "I am." There's the Self, with a capital S, which is Consciousness, God, pure Awareness. There is mySelf, with a capital S, which is the impersonal individual consciousness that WhatIs is expressed as. These two are in spiritual consciousness. And there is the third sense of myself, with a little s, which most people have in mind when they talking about themselves. This is the human experience self, the personal sense of self as a separate entity, with a body and a mind, separate from WhatIs, doing its own thing, autonomous.

Material and mental consciousnesses are human, small-s self, levels of consciousness. There is nothing spiritual about manipulating material power or mental power, nothing

spiritual about knowing metaphysical truth or using mental power. Mental healing is not spiritual, Voodoo is not spiritual, hexing is not spiritual; affirmations are not spiritual.

Myself is this personal sense: this body that was an infant, became a boy, became a man, and continues to mature; this mind that has changed its content many, many times, and the personality that is associated with me.

MySelf is the expression of WhatIs as impersonal individual consciousness. This I am that I am aware of, this consciousness that is aware, is individual, but it's not personal. It's absolutely impersonal, without sex, without race, without religion, without nationality. It's just an individual expression of WhatIs, that has come into the leela to play this silly game of taking on body after body, lifetime after lifetime, trying to find out what god is, going through this dance from ignorance to enlightenment.

Spiritual consciousness is aware of Self and mySelf. Human consciousness, is aware of the body/mind phenomena, personalities, desires and all the things that are in the leela. This sense of myself has to go in order to attain spiritual consciousness.

The Nature of Mind

The leela takes place in mind. Let's review a few principles about consciousness and mind:

- There is only one Consciousness, and we are all expressions of it.
- Individual consciousnesses are not separate, but are one with Consciousness and all the other individual consciousnesses, like the relationship of the facets of a diamond to the diamond and the other facets.
- Mind is the aspect or function of consciousness which, like a mirror, immediately and precisely forms (reflects) the content of the consciousness governing it.
- There is only one mind, and we all participate in it.
- WhatIs's Creation in mind is the reflection of WhatIs's Consciousness.
- Creation has no relative conditions in it, like good and bad or beautiful and ugly.
- Mind does not add any conditions while forming the content of consciousness.
- Mind is not only forming Creation, the content of WhatIs's Consciousness, it's also forming individual creations reflecting the content of the individual consciousnesses, and experienced by those individuals.
- Mind forms individual beliefs.
- Creation is immutable but individual creations change as the individual consciousness governing mind changes.

The spiritual beings are the facets of the diamond, the impersonal individual expressions of WhatIs, having the nature of WhatIs, which the Bible refers to as having the image and likeness of God. The human experience is the result of identification with the images in mind reflecting the current content of our individual consciousnesses.

The Human Experience

Humans experience images in mind which have been conditioned by the all the human beliefs about duality. We don't experience Creation. We experience human concepts of Creation. When we see disease, limitation, etc., we are seeing forms reflecting the extent of our association with the universal human beliefs. A person struggling with a problem is judging by the appearances formed in mind, not by spiritual discernment. That person is hypnotized. We do not live in a material world. We are hypnotized by the human beliefs into experiencing the leela that is sometimes good and sometimes bad.

Believing we're human means we're tuned in to the cesspool of human beliefs. We have been conditioned by human beliefs since even before our birth. We started being affected by our mother's beliefs while we were still in the womb. We registered her joys and fears. We continued to be conditioned after our birth by everyone who came into our experience. They taught us worry by worrying about us, as if we were the baby body. They taught us separation as babies: "this is *my* nose," and "that is *your* nose," etc. Every person, every teacher, every book, every television show, every movie, every church sermon, every advertisement continued to affirm that we are separate beings, isolated, independent and not good enough. We were thoroughly conditioned into these beliefs before we were able to think. And there are all the other beliefs that humanity holds about self preservation, which emphasize that there is an individual self to preserve, and that only the fittest survive, which again stress our separateness.

Six billion humans are believing and radiating these beliefs into the one consciousness. These are the material and mental beliefs that are the current level of the collective human awareness. And they are all based in fear. Universal human belief is a caldron of fears based on the false belief that we're separate and on our own.

Most humans have no idea that all their beliefs are conditioned. *Everything* humans believe is wrong. And the conditioning is continually being reapplied subliminally, 24/7. It's amazing that anybody ever gets out of it.

What we individually experience is the reflection of our current individual awareness. Each of us sees differently. We see things that are consistent with the human beliefs we resonate with, images consistent with our current conditioning, judgments and fears. We see how far along the path from ignorance to transcendence we are.

The Players in the Human Condition

The human condition is made up of several components. We've talked about Self, mySelf and myself. Self is WhatIs, the diamond; mySelf is an impersonal, individual expression of WhatIs, a facet of the diamond. Myself is the human experience, my personal sense of self. Notice that myself has no corresponding part in the diamond. Myself is not part of WhatIs. It's part of what appears to be – hypnosis.

Perhaps we can visualize our "myselfs" as being outside the diamond trying to look into it through our particular facet (of course there really is no outside the diamond).

Joel talked about a funnel with God as the infinitely wide mouth, the spiritual being (I am) as the spout and human experiences as being at the end of the spout. We can think of mind

as a bubble at the end of all the spouts. As our realization of God increases, it's as if the spout is getting wider, and more of God is pouring into our lives.

Our parallel has God as the diamond, I am as the facet and the human experiences outside the facet in a mind bubble. We are in the mind bubble trying to see into the diamond (realize WhatIs), but the facets are covered with the dust of our human beliefs. Our facets are infinite, but the amount we experience of ourSelves, as human experiences, is initially almost zero; our facets are completely obscured by our concepts and conditioning. As we grow in realization, our false beliefs get fewer and our facets get cleaner. We can see more of our facets, and through them, WhatIs, until we finally realize that we have always been the facets.

Within the human experience there also appear to be several players. Universal human belief (human consciousness, human mind, world mind) is nothing more that all the beliefs in powers other that WhatIs and in the dualities such as good and evil. We can think of universal human belief as having a broadcasting station, KUHB, that is hypnotizing us and subliminally reinforcing the hypnosis. KUHB, broadcasting impersonally into all the individual human consciousness, causes the images humans see reflected in mind – mass hypnosis. If we had no thoughts or understandings of our own, we would see exactly what humanity believes.

An aspect of KUHB is what Barbara called universal parent. This is the part of the broadcast that uses the words "supposed to," "ought to" and "should," and their negatives "not supposed to," "ought not" and "shouldn't." It often has a voice that sounds like our mother's or our father's; it can be visualized as shaking a finger at us. Universal parent is always wrong! All shoulds and shouldn'ts are false. The idea that things should be other than they are is ridiculous, given that WhatIs is the only power. Also thinking our experience should be different is laughable: it's the reflection of our own beliefs.

We sometimes refer to the aspects of ourselves which appear to be listening to universal parent as "kids." These are the fearful parts of us that are completely in the illusion, believing the lies about their inadequacies. These kids author most of our human, fear-based behaviors.

A spiritual teacher once told me that there are really just two fundamental lies that humans believe. The first is that we're not all right; the second is that we can and should do something about that.

Two Sources of Input

As we sow, we reap. Human consciousness, in its un-illumined state, which is full of materialistic beliefs, conflicting doctrines, opinions, theories and conditioning, can only manifest chaos. But when we are freed of all these ideas, mind becomes the instrument through which we can experience Creation's eternal harmony.

There are two sources of input to our individual consciousnesses for mind to form. One source is KUHB (Universal Human Belief). The other is WTIS (WhatIs). We come into humanhood with a radio with two stations. As delivered from the factory, our radios are tuned to KUHB, and they come with springs on the dial that keep them tuned that way. We eventually discover that there is a WTIS station on it as well, and that we can dial over to it

and experience harmony, but the minute we let go the spring snaps us back to KUHB. The process of learning the letter of truth and meditating weakens the spring.

When we can stay tuned to WTIS, stop listening to KUHB, stop receiving all the conditioned beliefs, our minds will become unconditioned, because it was KUHB that was conditioning us. We will be free of concepts and judgments and we will experience peace.

If we rise above human belief, we're no longer conditioned. And when we're unconditioned, we experience the unconditioned creation that has always been expressed in the unconditioned mind. Actually we won't see that creation because it's incorporeal. We'll continue to see images that are consistent with our five senses. But now the images we see will reflect the nature of WhatIs rather than the nature of the erroneous beliefs floating around in universal human belief.

It is this sense that mind should be used as a tool of awareness. If we are conditioned it reflects our conditioning, and we can see the work we still have to do. If we can uncondition our individual consciousnesses, then our minds become instruments of awareness of WhatIs, manifested for our five senses, a five-sense concept of immortality, harmony and perfection, rather than of lack, limitation and suffering.

Rising to Spiritual Consciousness

So that's the goal in this work; that's what this human experience is all about. The script for the leela is about rising to spiritual consciousness. What's happening is not that we're suddenly rising to spiritual consciousness; we've been doing that since we were an amoeba. But we are now consciously aware that we are rising to spiritual consciousness.

Becoming aware of how it all works is the first big step towards attaining spiritual consciousness. As long as we were totally ignorant, we floundered, but now we can grow spiritually by practicing methods that work rather than by eliminating everything that doesn't work.

Go Within

Our (real) Selves will guide us towards this transcendental consciousness, and see to it that we find the right teacher, the right teaching, the right book, etc., when we learn to go within. We can learn to check if something is true. OurSelves will tell us. Barbara called this faculty our "radar for truth." If we go within and ask, our radar for truth will tell us whether something is true or not. We will always know, when we have learned to listen within, whether we're hearing truth or not. We need to use this faculty when we're considering these finger-pointing words. We study them until we understand them, and then go within individually to see if they're true for us.

There's an amazing amount of conditioning contrary to these truths. But it is a consistent truth that has been taught by every mystic and spiritual leader for the past 4,000 years. They're all seeing something; they're all seeing the same thing, whatever it is. And that which is at the center of you, the spiritual being you really are, already knows this truth.

VI. Rising to Mystical Consciousness

As an introduction to spiritual consciousness, we've already covered enough mystical truth. Now we get to the question of attainment.

Those who've had the mystical experience talk about eternal harmony, oneness, peace and perfection; yet we look around the world and notice that, out of its six billion people, roughly six billion of them are not having this experience, are not seeing peace and harmony in their lives, and do not have any *experience* of a god in their life. Most of these people *believe* that god is in their life, but their lives don't show it.

On the other hand, Jesus, Buddha, Joel and many other enlightened masters have demonstrated a consciousness capable of transforming, healing and bringing forth harmony.

Joel made it absolutely clear why God fails to have a positive effect in the lives of the six billion: it's not that God is effective wherever God is – God is *omnipresent*; it's that God is effective wherever God is *realized*. We are now in a position to understand that revelation: I experience WhatIs when WhatIs is in my consciousness. It's almost trivial. When I'm conscious of WhatIs, WhatIs is in my consciousness. When I'm not, It's not, and my experience reflects what I *am* conscious of. When WhatIs is in my consciousness, that is what mind is outpicturing as my experience. When I am realizing the presence of WhatIs, I have harmony in my experience, and if you, sitting next to me, are not conscious of the presence of WhatIs, then mind is not expressing harmony in your experience. It's not the truth that sets us free; it's *knowing* the truth that sets us free.

So, if WhatIs is not in our experience until we have attained consciousness of It, how do we attain that consciousness?

Obstacles

The Bhagavad Gita says that out of a thousand people only one seeks, and out of thousand seekers only one attains, which means that only one in a million attains transcendental consciousness. The good news for us is that the first 999 are already by the wayside. We are the seekers. We are already the one, but the Bhagavad Gita is saying that out of a thousand like us, only one will attain. Not very encouraging odds.

And there's another thousand that isn't mentioned: out of a thousand who attain, only one is suddenly struck enlightened without having to do any work. That's one in a billion that is struck enlightened. It's a very rare thing, not something to count on. The rest of us have to do it the hard way; we have to slog; we have to trudge; we get to play the game in the leela of developing our consciousness from experience to experience, lifetime after lifetime.

So what makes it so difficult? Why is it that only one in a million attains? The answer, in a word, is conditioning – by our parents, our schools, our churches, television, movies, books, advertising, etc.

Universal human belief creates an almost overwhelming pressure to stay conditioned, to believe what everyone else "knows" is true. Let's go back and look at the emptying out topics that we talked about in the first chapter.

First, every concept that we have about god is a barrier to attaining transcendental consciousness. If we have a concept that god is any *thing,* we have blocked ourselves completely from spiritual consciousness because consciousness does not have any *things*. Consciousness is incorporeal, immaterial, and things are material. So if we have any idea that god is a thing, or a person, or up there somewhere, we've blocked ourselves.

Also, if we have any of the conditioned concepts that god can give us anything or is withholding anything from us, that god can fulfill or withdraw, if we have any concept about some being that is making decisions about whether we have correctly invoked it before it grants our wish, then we have separated ourselves from WhatIs. WhatIs is eternal and unchanging. WhatIs is Consciousness. WhatIs doesn't have any things. WhatIs doesn't have any matter. Matter is in the leela. Matter is in human consciousness. So if we go to a god for some thing, we're blocking ourselves. Even thinking there is a god separate from ourselves is an obstacle.

Another obstacle is the idea of *attaining* spiritual consciousness. WhatIs has already expressed Itself as us, and that expression is full and complete; we already have everything. We already *are* everything that WhatIs is. The idea that we lack something is a human idea and striving to overcome it keeps us human. We can't transcend human consciousness if we're trying to attain anything. It's the human that is trying.

Joel mentions three obstacles to attainment. The first is the belief in more than one power: the belief that there is a power other than god, which leads to the belief in good and evil. The belief in good and evil is a barrier. There is just the one Consciousness, which is eternal and unchanging. Good and evil, good becoming evil, evil becoming good, are not conditions of WhatIs, or mind. They are human concepts. In fact, the definition of good and evil changes from day to day, from group to group, religion to religion, country to country. The belief in more than one power, or in good and evil, is what *makes* us human.

Also, the idea that we can become more spiritual by being good is an obstacle. Being "good" or being "bad" is completely irrelevant to attaining spiritual consciousness. There is no good; there is no bad. There's just WhatIs, eternal peace, eternal perfection, eternal absence of disharmony. Being a do-gooder will surely keep us from realizing WhatIs, as will thinking we can do evil. This doesn't mean that we don't do anything. As our life unfolds, we may do a lot of "good," but it will not be us doing good for the sake of doing good; it will be us having a clear realization of the presence of WhatIs in our life; it will be WhatIs expressing Itself as us, and that expression will be harmonious ("good.") And we may do some "evil" as well, but it will not be us doing evil; it will be us ignorantly allowing universal human belief to express itself through us.

Joel's second obstacle is judging. Judging is an obstacle because what we're judging is an appearance in the leela. It's like judging whether the water in the mirage on the desert is hot or cold. Judgment is of the images in mind, and the images are not real. Judgment keeps us focused on the leela. As far as spiritual attainment is concerned, a good picture is the same as a bad picture; a healthy picture is the same as an unhealthy picture. Either judgment means we think the image has existence on its own. When we realize that we're seeing our own concept of the eternal, impersonal expression of WhatIs, we are less inclined to judge.

Joel's third obstacle is self-preservation – the foundation of human consciousness – the conviction that we have to take care of ourselves. We think we have to preserve ourselves against all the others. Unfortunately, the selves that we're trying to preserve are the problem. They're just the material concepts in the leela, false personal senses of the impersonal expressions of WhatIs that we really are. We're trying to preserve what has to go.

Another thing we need to let go of (not suppress) is desire. The desire for anything is an obstacle. You may recall that Patanjali put attraction and aversion on the list of causes for suffering. We might say desire and fear are synonymous with attraction and aversion. If we want something or are afraid of something we're locked into being human because the desire is for some *thing*; the fear is of some *thing*. We're stuck in the material world; we're in human consciousness, and the ones that want or fear are our personal senses of self. So desiring or fearing anything keeps us in the leela.

Barbara's four lists of everything we love, hate, fear and desire are lists of the things that are tying us to human consciousness. Before we're done these four lists have to be *empty*. Are you beginning to see now why this is a one in a thousand type thing; why it's a daunting process?

Here's another potential obstacle: as our attachment to human consciousness diminishes, and our awareness of truth grows and becomes part of our belief, mind reflects it, and our humanhood appears to improve. As we realize the presence of WhatIs as the reality of everything and realize that human consciousness has no power, the content of our individual consciousness has changed and the picture changes. Perhaps our lacks begin to be fulfilled, or we begin to get healthy, or we become employed. When these things happen, we often get complacent and stop focusing on spiritual growth.

It's easy to get sidetracked when our life gets comfortable. People seldom undertake a spiritual path because their life is perfect, and they're curious why that is. Most seekers are initially seeking human improvement. There's nothing wrong with that, but when their dilemma is resolved they go back to what they were doing. The problem is that as we drift away from daily work on taking control of the content of our consciousness (Joel's protective work), we start experiencing human consciousness more and more, and whatever we have gained humanly may begin to disappear. The human life is one of suffering because in human consciousness good things turn bad, bad things turn good, healthy bodies turn sick and sick bodies turn healthy. It just keeps turning over when we're living in the world of duality. This was Buddha's first noble truth: Human life is suffering.

Never underestimate the attraction of the leela. It has infinitely many ways of luring us back into the play. We can get lured into being good, into taking care of our parents or our children, into saving the starving children in Ethiopia, into promoting world peace. The whole purpose of human consciousness seems to be to make us believe that something in the dream is important. And every time we get distracted, we're off the spiritual path, and we're one of the remaining 999.

Finally the idea of a personal self, the idea that we're body/minds, is an obstacle, one of the things that has to go. There does appear to be a body and a mind here and that will continue regardless of whether we're in human consciousness or spiritual consciousness.

The problem is that we have associated ourselves with these material body/minds. We think these body/minds are us. We think we are the role, not the actor or actress. When we have a nightmare, the problem is not that the image of ourselves in the dream is in trouble. The problem is that we've identified with that image and we believe *we're* in trouble. The solution to every dream problem is the same: Wake up!

Similarly, the problem with this leela is that we are identifying with these material body/minds. We're associating with the i-thoughts, rather than identifying with the I's that we really are. We think we're the body/minds in human consciousness, participating in the rat race.

Practices

There are innumerable obstacles to attaining enlightenment. We've mentioned just a few of the more deeply conditioned ones. So, how do we overcome them and attain spiritual consciousness? There are several practices that will help us raise our level of consciousness.

Being Around Higher Consciousness

Since there's only one consciousness and only one mind, we are affected by those around us. It's depressing to hang out with people who are depressed and joyful to be with people who are full of joy. Similarly, it's spiritually uplifting to be with people who realize more than we do. Being tuned in to human consciousness is what has conditioned us and is keeping us conditioned. Being in the consciousness of a person who is fully realized is the most powerful tool there is for lifting us out of the hypnotism.

I was once blessed with sitting in front of Osho for five or ten minutes while he told me a Sufi story. I was transformed. The immediate result was that I completely lost the next 20 minutes. One minute I was in front of him, the next instant, to me, I was sitting in the middle of a bunch of dancing devotees. Initiation was over. There had been several waiting behind me for their minutes with Osho, but they were through, and the live music and dancing was in full swing.

The next result I noticed was when I came to a celebration a few days later. I saw his car arriving out of the corner of my eye, and my heart burst with love. I realized that prior to that moment I had not known what love was. During those five or ten minutes he had cracked my heart open like a walnut. That's what five or ten minutes with an enlightened master can do. It's the single most powerful aid to attainment.

I spent the next nine years, back here in the states, letting the rest of what had happened to me during those few minutes unfold. It led to my encountering Robert Adams, my second guru. I took one look at him and my deepest center said, "Oh, bleep!" I recognized him as another Osho, and my humanhood knew that it had just lost any chance of survival. He looked at me and laughed. He knew I was his. The grace I received sitting with him three times a week for several years can't be expressed.

Being around a higher consciousness is an uplifting experience, so going where the consciousness is higher is an excellent practice for attaining higher consciousness.

Also, being in a community of people who are working on raising their consciousness, rather than spending time with those who are immersed in human consciousness, will help a great deal in breaking down our conditioning.

Learning the Letter of Truth

Another important tool for lifting ourselves above human consciousness is what Joel called "learning the letter of truth." Even though Truth cannot be expressed, many true things can be said about the nature of WhatIs and what appears to be, and the rest can be pointed at.

Joel began recording his classes in 1950 and discovered that, to a significant extent, the consciousness of the speaker was transmitted to the listeners. Considering the omnipresence of individual consciousness, it is not difficult to understand that an enlightened consciousness is omnipresent and is available to tape listeners, to the extent that they can tune in. Joel demonstrated the omnipresence of his consciousness when he healed people who were physically 10,000 miles away, even before he received their request by mail, so of course his consciousness was (and still is) with those who were listening to the tapes.

The same thing holds true for written words, either transcriptions of talks or original works. Any of Joel's, Robert's or Osho's books or tapes is uplifting because of the consciousness of the master.

It should be obvious that the consciousness of the author of the work being listened to or read is critical. Don't waste time on popular discussions or explanations of the works of masters. We want the master's consciousness, not some intellectual's. If the original work was in another language, that introduces a level of indirection. The consciousness of the translator is almost as important as that of the master.

Learning the letter of truth not only lifts us, it helps de-program us. Hearing truth begins to point out all the incorrect beliefs we have been conditioned with. It begins to thin out the molasses our heads are filled with, which keeps us stuck in our humanhood. As the molasses thins, the faculties of awareness, insight and intuition begin to open up. We arrive at the point where we can practice meditation, the art of opening a pipeline out through the molasses to our own direct experience of truth.

Practicing the Letter of Truth

Joel says that the primary reason for practicing spiritual healing is not to rid people of some malady. Bringing temporary relief spiritually is not significantly different from a medical solution to the problem. If, however, the people who have healings are able to maintain some of the spiritual altitude they have been lifted to, that's a step up.

Another reason for healing work is that it's a carrot; it demonstrates the power of truth and leads some to want an understanding of the principles by which they were healed.

But the most important benefit of practicing healing work comes to the practitioner. Practicing the healing principles every time we're tempted to accept the picture presented by human consciousness is the spiritual practice that will make the principles part of our own consciousness, rather than remaining the letter of truth in our intellects.

Meditation

Joel tells us that the fundamental tool for attainment is meditation. He introduced a specific step-by-step formula to the west, which he called contemplative meditation. First we need to have some statements of the letter of truth that we have been learning. For him they were usually quotations from scripture because he had had their truth revealed to him. For us scripture isn't necessarily an authority, so we have to find others, but whatever statements ring true to us will do.

We take one of these pointers at truth into our consciousness and contemplate it. We just think about it, think what it means, let our intellects play with it and explore it. Soon we'll begin to have new thoughts about this truth that we're playing with. To the extent that we have any sort of a window open through our molasses to ourSelves, more truth will come to us. After a few minutes of contemplation, we may have a realization, or a feeling of acceptance, or a deeper understanding. Then there's often a window during which our minds are quiet. Maybe just for a second or two, or five, maybe for a minute, there's a period of quiet.

This is the beginning of making contact with ourSelves, of having a conscious realization of WhatIs. During the moment of silence we adopt an attitude of listening, waiting quietly to feel the presence or hear the still small voice. We're using contemplation of the letter of truth to help open a little pipe out through the molasses to ourSelves, to get some more truth, to get a deeper sense of truth, until we get into a place, just for a moment, of peace. And in that peace we listen.

The listening is what Joel calls prayer. Let's deal with vocabulary for a moment. The word meditation is commonly used both for the practice of meditating and the state of consciousness it leads to. Joel uses the term contemplative meditation to talk about the practice, and the word prayer to talk about that moment of silence. For most people prayer is a loaded word that has to do with asking god for things, so we'll use the phrase "sitting in the silence" instead. We'll use the variety of specific names, from contemplative meditation to vapassana, for the practices.

The important thing is to be silent and receptive. Every time we are silent and listen, even for a second or two, we are increasing our ability to feel the presence of WhatIs.

It is ourSelves that have brought us to this work. The reason we're led to books like this one is ourSelves are bringing us to the next piece of information we need on our spiritual path. What we're really doing while sitting in the silence is listening to ourSelves, trying to hear ourSelves, trying to drop this personal sense of self, the costume and mask that we're wearing.

If we are new to contemplative meditation, it is usually better to hold twenty 30-second practices a day than it is to meditate for an hour at a time. In the 30-second period, we pause, remember the presence of WhatIs in our lives, and listen (go within). That's a total of 10 minutes in the day. It's likely that 55 minutes of an hour's practice will be wasted with mind chatter. Remembering who we really are twenty times a day is a more effective way to build our spiritual muscle.

There are really two tools here. First, "contemplative meditation" is contemplating a truth until the mind grows silent, then listening for as long as the mind is silent, and then getting up and going on about our business. This is a good way to begin and end our days.

Second, "practicing the presence" is pausing frequently throughout the day to go within. We can develop tricks to remember to go within. For example, we can use walking out the door to remind us to go within, so the presence of WhatIs, rather than universal human belief, will determine our experience as we go out into the world. When the phone rings, we could go within for a second before we answer it to remember that another expression of WhatIs is on the phone, not a human being. When we get into the car, we might pause just for a second, reach for the presence and remember who's driving all the cars on the freeway, including ours. This will bring about a much better experience than driving with a bunch of humans who are not paying attention, or who are on their cell phones, or drunk. The freeway flows much better if WhatIs is driving all the vehicles, which It is if you realize it, and which It isn't if you don't.

Self Inquiry

Another tool for getting into the silence to experience who we really are is called self inquiry. Robert said self inquiry is the most direct path.

For example, suppose we're trying to be silent, but we can't because our mind is chattering. We simply ask ourselves, "Who's thinking?" Our mind will say, "*I'm* thinking." We then ask, "Who is this I that's thinking?" and listen. We don't answer the second question – we just listen.

This question goes to the root of the problem. The problem is not that we're thinking rather than being silent. The problem is that we're identified with the one who is thinking rather than the one who is always silent. Our identification with our individual body/minds is the problem. Taking a step back and identifying with the spiritual beings that we really are is the solution.

So we ask, "Who is this I? or alternatively, "Where did this I come from?" and wait silently for an answer. After a while, or maybe almost immediately, the mind generates another thought or question, and we ask again, "Who's thinking?" "I am thinking." "Well, who is this I who is thinking?" As we continue this process, the gap between thoughts will expand.

We can practice self inquiry all day long. We don't have to be sitting somewhere alone to practice it. If we're on the freeway, instead of getting irate at the person who cuts us off, we ask, "Who's getting irate?" and the answer will be, "I am." So we ask, "Well, who is this I? Where did this I come from?" and listen. We can use the technique constantly, whenever we have any experience, good or bad: "Who's getting upset? or "Who's afraid?" or "Who's becoming elated?"

We constantly inquire who it is that's having any reaction because it's the idea that there is a personal human self that is causing the reaction. If I'm afraid, the I that thinks it's afraid is myself with a small s, this illusory self that thinks it's separate from WhatIs, and that self truly doesn't exist. That self is just a concept reflected in mind.

After we ask, "Who is this I?" or "Where does this I come from?" Robert told us to abide in the I. While we're silently not answering the final question, we look for the source of this i-thought. We can keep thinking, "i," "i," "i…" looking for who or what this small i is, looking for where this personal i comes from. This practice results in the small i disappearing into the nothing that it is, because it has no reality. There is no such entity. I is just a thought in our minds that dissolves under scrutiny. It's just the i-thought, the belief that there is a personal I.

The continual chatter of the mind about "I," I this, I that, I need, I…, gives us the idea that there is some entity that is the subject of all these thoughts. The apparent continuity of these endless discrete i-thoughts *is* the illusion of personal identity. Self inquiry creates a gap between them.

Another reason we believe so strongly in the personal I is we are conditioned to believe that everything has a cause. If there are thoughts, there must be a thinker; if something is done, there must be a doer. Since there's no other thinker or doer around, we manufacture this personal sense as the originator of what we think of as our own thoughts and activities. We must remember that the effects in mind cannot be causes. Everything is an effect of the one cause, including "our" thoughts and actions. We are not the authors of our thoughts or actions.

Practicing self inquiry for a sufficient period of time may result in the ability to get into the silence immediately just by thinking, "Who?" OurSelves know that the i-thought is nothing and the real I is Consciousness, so eventually just saying "Who?" will drop us directly into the silence.

Self inquiry is difficult for many people. It is more natural for people whose nature is grow spiritually through the use of the mind, but it may be difficult for those of a devotional nature or those whose natural path is through being of service.

The Awareness Exercise

Barbara introduced a shortcut for getting into the silence which she called the awareness exercise. It is usually done as a guided meditation, but that isn't necessary. We'll give you the directions here, so you can play with it.

The practice involves learning to use our awareness faculty. We all have this faculty, since we are, in fact, awareness itself, but most people don't know they have it and don't know how to use it as a tool. They think they are limited to their five senses plus thinking, and the awareness faculty is not one of these. We can be aware that we are aware, and that does not involve any of the senses or thinking.

We begin to learn about our awareness faculty by focusing it on our physical body. For example, close your eyes and tell yourself to be aware of your left elbow. Don't visualize your left elbow; don't feel it. Just be aware of it – be aware that you have a left elbow, and focus your awareness on it. Try it now. You will discover that you can be aware of your left elbow without involving any of your five senses or thoughts or imagination.

When you are aware of your left elbow, without using any of your five senses (you can do this – really!), move your awareness somewhere else. Become aware of your right ear, or the

top or your head, or some other body part. When you're aware of the new part, without any thoughts or images in you mind, notice that you are no longer aware of your left elbow.

Practice this until you're comfortable with it. Now, become aware of your left elbow again and try to increase your awareness of it. Just tell yourself to increase your awareness of your left elbow. You will have some experience of increase, maybe just a sense of more focused awareness, maybe some physical sensation. Practice this until you know can do it. Now change your focus again, become aware of another part and increase your awareness. This phase of the exercise proves that we have an awareness faculty, that it is different from any of our five senses or our thoughts and imagination, and that it goes wherever we direct it.

Now we move from the physical to the spiritual. Tell yourself to be aware of "I," the capital I, the sense of being you have. Be aware of the I that you are, the presence that you mean when you think "I am." Don't think "I am" now, just tell yourself to be aware of the I that you are. It's impossible to describe what this awareness is like, since it's different for each of us, but there is a definite sense of I-ness that you will be able to find, which has nothing to do with your body or your mind. It's your being. You will know you are aware of your I when you realize that it is not within your body.

When you're good at being aware of your I, see if you can increase your awareness of it. Expand your awareness of I. No pictures, no thoughts about it, just I – awareness of the presence of yourSelf.

At this point you are already well beyond most people, who are totally unaware of their spiritual self. You are actually Self-aware, rather than body/mind aware. Practice this until you can become aware of your I and increase that awareness easily.

Now, while still aware of I, tell yourself to be aware of the Silence that is behind I, or which contains I, or underlies I. You'll need to find the word that feels right to you. Silence is just one inadequate word for what it is that contains your I – it's not silent. It has been well said that the Silence is not the absence of sound; it's the absence of self, personal self, myself. It's also neither space nor a vacuum; it's Consciousness. And it's not "behind" it, nor does it "contain" it, or "underlie" it, in a sense of space. It's really no *thing*, but it's there. Whatever it's like for you, whichever term suits you best, practice becoming aware of it. And now increase your awareness of the Silence.

You are now in the Silence, the jumping off point for mystical experiences.

Immersion

The next thing we want to talk about is immersion. Our difficulty is the unbelievable extent to which we have been conditioned. It's as if we've been programmed by a universal cult, called humanity, into believing we're one of them. And we need to be de-programmed, de-hypnotized. When we consider the extent of the conditioning we have received and the extent to which our programming is being reinforced every minute of every day by everyone we meet and everything we read, watch or listen to, we get an idea of the size of the de-programming task we are undertaking.

Barbara said that *minimum* daily work for a serious student included a (60 minute) tape of some spiritual master each day, plus a chapter a day from a spiritual book, and at least four meditations a day.

Focusing on one tape, and hearing it again and again, letting it settle deeper and deeper into our consciousness each time, is often better than hearing lots of tapes. The number of tapes, the amount of truth we have heard and even memorized, is not what does the work. Getting one truth into our consciousness, so that we experience its truth, is what does the job. Then we can move on to the next one.

The deeper our immersion in spiritual truth, the quicker we become deprogrammed, and the better chance we have of being the one rather than one of the 999.

Secrecy

Joel stressed spiritual secrecy as the most important spiritual principle. Jesus said that when you pray, go into your closet to pray; don't pray where people can see you. And he said when you give alms, do it in secret; don't give alms where people can see you. Do everything spiritual privately, quietly, and in secret. One reason for secrecy is so that we won't be doing it to be seen, which means that we're in our ego, a barrier to attainment of spiritual consciousness. But there is a better reason.

Secrecy is especially important with new truths that we've heard, but which we may not have deeply realized yet. Taking a new truth out into the world and sharing it with people who are not yet ready to hear it will invariably result in backlash. They feel compelled to tear down what they aren't ready to accept. They'll tell you your truth is nonsense and perhaps make you doubt it. This could result in your losing that truth, and you may not get it again in this lifetime; it may be gone.

It's important to keep new truths and new understandings, as well as your spiritual practices, quietly within you. As the truth deepens and becomes realized, it will become part of your consciousness, and when it's part of your consciousness mind will express it for you; it will become manifest in your life. When that happens, people will see it and come to you and ask, "How come your life is working so well?" At that point you're demonstrating it, the truth is yours, and you can share it if they're serious students, serious seekers. Now you can tell them what you're doing that resulted in this manifestation.

It will become revealed on its own when you have realized it deeply enough that mind manifests it in your experience. And until that happens you don't really believe it; it's not yours yet, so you can't share it.

Talking about a spiritual truth with those who have not yet realized that truth is, at best, a waste of time. If several people hear the same truth, they will all hear what they are capable of hearing, what's right for them. If they then discuss it and come to an agreement on what was said, some of them will have lost the understanding that was appropriate for them at that time. Remember that the words that were said were not the truth, they were a finger pointing at the truth; so any discussion will be about the hand, not the moon. When the truth has been realized, it will manifest, and there will still be no reason to discuss it – the moonlight will be obvious.

Even when you have realized a truth, it is not appropriate to go "out there" carrying the message. We will see thousands whose lives would benefit if they realized that truth, but telling them won't help them until they are able to hear it. When they are ready to hear it, they will see that you have it; it is manifesting in your life for those who can see to see, and they will come to you to get it.

So work quietly within yourself. If you're led to it, it's reasonable to share any revelations that you have had with your teacher. Teachers are often able to add a little more insight and deepen it for you, but it's certainly not necessary to share it even with your teacher. Trust yourSelf.

VII. Practical Mysticism

This chapter could as well have been called living by grace, but calling it practical mysticism is more fun. It's an oxymoron to human consciousness. Human consciousness is convinced that mysticism is completely impractical, and most orthodox religions concur. It's been suggested from many church pulpits that Jesus' statements, such as "Take no thought for tomorrow, what you shall eat…," may have worked in his day, but they're not practical today. What Jesus was talking about was living a life by grace. The ones speaking from the pulpits are conditioned by human thinking.

The following will hopefully give us a glimpse of the practicality of a mystical consciousness. We will make no attempt at a thorough coverage. This book is an introduction. We will merely try to give an indication of a mystical approach to a few topics.

Living by Grace

WhatIs is not present in the human experience except when and where it is realized. When we are experiencing the presence of WhatIs, then It is effective in our lives. When we are realizing that we are individual expressions of WhatIs, then WhatIs is the content of our individual consciousnesses and that determines the nature of what is formed as our human experiences. Our life reflects harmony and fulfillment. That's called "Grace." Grace and the realization of the presence of WhatIs are identical.

We tend to think of grace as something that can happen, but is perhaps not happening now; maybe it will come to us sometime in the future. But when we talk from the mystical standpoint, everything is eternal. WhatIs transcends time and space. WhatIs is complete. When we talk about coming into grace, we're not talking about WhatIs deciding to bestow grace upon us; we're talking about us achieving enough realization of the presence of WhatIs to experience the omnipresent, eternal grace that has always been and will always be.

It's so incredibly simple that we miss it entirely: we experience what's in our consciousness, nothing more, nothing less. If WhatIs is not in our conscious, Grace is not in our experience.

We also hear about the grace of the guru. It's the same grace. Gurus are illumined, continuously aware of their oneness with WhatIs, so by being in the consciousness of our guru we are lifted into experiencing the presence of WhatIs, and that's called grace.

So grace is omnipresent, and it manifests in our life. We live by grace to the extent that we realize it

Supply

Supply is the favorite topic of beginning metaphysics and mysticism students. Everyone has some reason for beginning the path and lack seems to be a good one.

The problem with supply is that humans are conditioned to think in terms of getting. "I need to get this;" "I get to go on vacation;" "I get to come back;" "I don't get it." Human consciousness is all about getting, and it's all about things. When we consider supply, we immediately think about getting things. We think about income and material things like dollars, stock certificates, money for dinner, or whatever we think will fulfill our particular

need. Unfortunately, WhatIs doesn't know anything about getting; it is fulfilled, and it doesn't know anything about things, dollars, stock certificates, money or dinner. WhatIs is spirit. WhatIs doesn't know about anything material. Material things are in the human mind.

Instead of looking at supply from the viewpoint of trying to get something, let's go back to mystical truth: we think we're ourselves, these personal senses, but we're in fact ourSelves, impersonal individual expressions of WhatIs. OurSelves are one with the Self, facets of the diamond, and the Self is completely fulfilled right now; It always has been, and It always will be. Fulfillment is true of all of WhatIs, which includes ourSelves, so the fulfillment of ourSelves is already in existence, already a fact. The only "problem" is here in our personal senses of self, who believe they are separate from WhatIs and who are not experiencing WhatIs's fulfillment because of that belief. If we're not conscious of our oneness with WhatIs, we're not conscious that we are fulfilled, so it's not our experience.

If we realize the presence of WhatIs, we realize that, as part of the One, we are fulfilled. That becomes our experience, and we say that supply is flowing. The outflow of the fulfillment of WhatIs into our experience is what we call supply. It was always omnipresent, but now it is in our experience, taking whatever form it needs to take in the leela.

Notice the use of the word outflow. Usually what's "true" in human consciousness is the opposite of what's true in spiritual consciousness. Mystically, supply is outflow, not income. When we consider that WhatIs is the only creator, the only source, and that everything "out there" is an effect of creation, we see that supply cannot come from anyone or anything out there; there are no sources out there. So everything must flow from the Infinite Source through grace, through realization of Oneness. Supply is the flowing of the infinity of WhatIs into our experience, through our enlightened individual consciousnesses. If we appear to be lacking, we go within to the Source, make contact, become more aware of the infinity, and experience it as it expresses in our lives.

Spiritual supply is our experience of WhatIs's fulfillment. Since we're experiencing as the human experiences with five senses, WhatIs's infinity is now formed by our individual minds in ways that are meaningful to our human experience, consistent with our material understanding. Our lives start to appear fulfilled. If our need is lunch, supply may look like someone coming by and saying, "Hey, I've got an extra sandwich in my bag, do you want it?" If our need is money, supply looks like someone offering us a job, or some relative we were unaware of sending money in the mail. When we're aware of the presence of WhatIs, the material story unfolds however it needs to, fulfilling our needs, without taking anything from anyone else.

The correct practice of supply is to practice realizing the presence of Grace, and letting it show forth however it will. If we start outlining what we want it to look like, we're back in humanhood, trying to manifest dollars, automobiles, or whatever we think we need. When we are in human consciousness, looking for material things, such as a car, rather than in the realization of Grace, our mind out-pictures our belief that we need a car, not the car itself. In fact we're maintaining the lack of car, or lunch, or whatever it is that we think we lack, since our beliefs are what we are outpicturing. The minute we're looking for

something material we're blocking it; the minute we're looking to get something, we're blocking it. But to the extent that we're realizing who we really are, with no thoughts of how things should look materially, our lives manifest fulfillment. And it will fulfill us specifically. We individually interpret fulfillment in mind. We will find a place to live that meets our standard of living, whatever that might be. Our needs will be met, not WhatIs's idea of our needs. WhatIs doesn't know what needs are. It is we who are fulfilled, so it will look like what it is appropriate for it to look like in our cases.

The basic rule of spiritual supply is this: if we want more of something in our life, we need to express more of it. It's easier to see when we talk about non-material things like love. If we want to experience more love in our lives, we can simply love more. We never feel another's love for us anyway. We may observe behaviors that we've been conditioned to believe indicate love, but we cannot experience anyone's love for us. The only love we ever feel is the love that we're expressing to someone or something, which in reality is WhatIs's love flowing out through us. That's the point of supply. It's WhatIs's love flowing out through us. If we want more love in our lives, we love more. If we want more friendship in our lives, we become more friendly.

It works the same with material things. What we call material things are no different because material things are actually the manifestation in mind of spiritual "things." If we want more stuff in our lives, we let more stuff flow out through us: we clean out our closets and give to Goodwill.

Tithing

Tithing is one way to start a supply outflow. It's like priming a pump. Tithing is traditionally thought of as being 10% of our income, but what's important is to begin with a percentage we're comfortable with – 5%, or less, is fine. The percentage will probably increase as we continue, because it feels good.

Lack is the out-picturing of the belief that we lack. Abundance is the out-picturing of the belief that we have abundance. If we start expressing the belief that we have, we turn our experience around.

We begin tithing by picking an amount we're comfortable with and giving it to an appropriate recipient. Often we tithe to the place that is uplifting and fulfilling us spiritually, but any organization that we feel led to support is fine.

Our attitude towards tithing is important: if we're focused on getting the other 90%, we're focusing on our lack (getting) and lack will continue. If we're tithing to demonstrate that we have, that we can give, we will begin to express having as our experience.

Tithing is the first bill we pay each month. We pay it out as the first fruits of the grace we are experiencing because we have and because we can.

Problems

Now, let's talk briefly about problems in general – "I have a problem" type problems. The fundamental principle of dealing with problems is this: never deal with the problem at the level of the problem. We've all heard that before. Now we have enough information to understand what it means. If we try to deal with the problem at the level of the problem –

to fix what we perceive as our problem "out there" – we're dealing with the world of effects, the out-picturing of the current content of our consciousnesses in mind. We're trying to fix the effects of our beliefs and conditioning.

It's like standing in front of a mirror, not liking what we see, and trying to improve the reflection by putting makeup on the glass. The problem is not in the mirror. The problem is in what's being reflected. When we're out there dealing with the problem, we're dealing with the reflection of our consciousness, working on the image. We may seem to be able to fix the problem, but the consciousness that was being reflected is unchanged and will continue to be reflected. Another problem just like it will show up. It may look different, with different players, in different costumes, but it will be the same problem, and it will continue to manifest as long as we try to deal with it out there. What we need to do is change the content of the consciousness which is causing the reflection in mind.

If we don't like what we're experiencing we need to change our beliefs. If we're not experiencing harmony we're being human – believing some human belief. If we work on realizing the presence of WhatIs in our lives, realizing WhatIs's harmony, then we're replacing the human belief, and the reflection will change and the problem will dissolve.

It doesn't matter what kind of problems we have. They're always the out-picturing of *our* consciousnesses. It's the content of *our* consciousnesses that needs to change.

There's one more thing worth noticing about problems: there are no such things! A problem is nothing more than a thought, the thought that something isn't the way it should be. If we didn't think it should be different, it wouldn't be a problem.

Employment

Another difficulty which may bring us to this work is employment, or the lack thereof. The spiritual truth about lack of employment is that there can be no such thing. WhatIs has expressed itself as individual you and me for Its own purposes, and It has not expressed Itself superfluously. It has expressed itself in infinitely many ways, and every expression is unique and part of the fullness. In Creation there is no unemployment. So once again the idea of unemployment is in human consciousness. If we go back to realizing WhatIs as our lives, i.e., Grace, the appearance of unemployment must change.

We must not confuse employment with income, however. WhatIs is not employed to make money. What we call employment is WhatIs fulfilling Itself. Spiritual employment is providing a service. There's no rule in spirit that says our supply has to come through our employment. That's a human fiction. As we grow spiritually, we become more aware of what we've come here to do, what our purpose is, so we do that. It's fulfilling to us in the sense that it brings us joy, but it may not bring in a penny. Our needs will be met through our supply consciousness. When we are employed in doing what we're here to do, the same grace which led us to that employment will also fulfill our needs. If we are attuned to fulfilling the purpose for which WhatIs expressed Itself as us, then WhatIs will not fail to provide Itself, as us, with whatever It requires.

It's all one. It's all realizing the presence of WhatIs, watching It unfold in our lives, and keeping the personal sense of self out of the way, so that It can.

Business

Many people claim it's impractical to run a business according to spiritual principles because the other guys don't. The other guys are out there doing it cut-throat, lying, cheating and advertising falsely. That's human consciousness again. Humans treat business situations just like they treat international situations. Internationally they're always looking for a bigger, better power to overcome other nations, and professionally they're looking for a bigger, better salesman to overcome the competition, or a bigger, better product, or a bigger, better advertisement. Once again they're out there trying to find a way to overcome and apply more power.

Spiritually, if my business is doing what WhatIs expressed Itself as mySelf to do, if I am engaged in the business or service which I was expressed to do, how could it fail? If WhatIs is in my consciousness, how could I not be provided with everything necessary to accomplish that service? How could WhatIs not provide Itself with what It needs to do what It manifested Itself to do? This awareness will result our businesses functioning successfully without taking anything away from anyone else, including competitors. Does WhatIs compete with Itself?

Companionship

By now perhaps we're beginning to see that all of these human difficulties are exactly the same. They are all a lack of Grace, a lack of realization of WhatIs in our lives. If we want more companionship, we let it flow. We can be a companion to as many people as we find it in ourselves to befriend. We can start experiencing companionship by taking care of a plant, or a pet. It's like emptying our closets of the things we don't wear to prime the supply pump.

By becoming companions, we experience more companionship, and it will be reflected back to us as others who become our companions. After all, we are only being companions to our Self.

Relationships

Any problems that we think we have in relationships (between well-intentioned adults) are based in what appears to be conflicting interests, but WhatIs does not have conflicts of interest with Itself. That's all we need to know about conflict in relationships. WhatIs does not have two expressions of Itself which are in conflict. WhatIs is fulfilled, complete, finished, so there can be no conflict of interest. When we realize this, the picture changes and the conflict dissolves.

It may look humanly like we sit down together and address the question of how we can have a conflict of interest. We both are interested in the success of our spiritual growth individually and mutually, and in the success of our partnership, so there can't really be a conflict of interest. An apparent conflict means we're not clear about what our interests really are, or about how best to serve them.

We can work with this practically: we can meditate together for a few minutes, then identify and discuss our interests, and see if we still have a conflict. If we still see a conflict, we meditate again, trying to realize who we really, and check our interests again. We keep

this up until we see what our mutual interests really are. Then we discuss how best to serve them.

Spiritual Healing

Another primary motive for seeking spiritual consciousness is spiritual healing. Joel says that spiritual healing is the revelation that there is no power in human belief. That's so very clear. Spiritual healing reveals that what we were looking at was hypnotism, the outpicturing of human beliefs, and that there was nothing sustaining it, no law or power underlying it. Upon encountering an enlightened consciousness the appearance dissolves. Every spiritual healing demonstrates the truth of this teaching.

We've talked about WhatIs as being eternally perfect, harmonious, and the only power, about what appears to be as the out-picturing in mind of a consciousness that's filled with human beliefs and about the fact that beliefs have no power except where accepted. Spiritual healing reveals that that's all true. When the appearance of flu, let's say, dissolves into the appearance of wellness, with no material or mental intervention, we have our proof.

The fundamental truth upon which spiritual healing is based is that there's nothing to heal! If there's an unharmonious appearance in mind, it's hypnosis. If people with such appearances go to practitioners for healings, they are thereby aligning their individual consciousnesses with the consciousnesses of the practitioners. If the practitioners are realizing the presence of WhatIs, the awarenesses of those reaching out will be lifted above human consciousness, and the appearances will change to conform to the new awarenesses. The disharmonies disappear and we say that they are healed.

Healing depends primarily on the height to which practitioners can lift themselves. Often that's a reflection of how long they've been practicing. Over the years, as we get more and quicker results, our confidence grows, but it usually takes several years to assimilate the principles fully.

It depends secondarily on how available the seekers are for being lifted. If clients are rigidly clinging to whatever belief is manifesting as their disharmony, they probably won't have a spiritual healing. Joel always continued working with a person for as long as the person stayed with him, and usually he was eventually able to break down the concepts, because Joel was a very high-level practitioner. But even Joel only healed 80-85 percent.

Protective Work

Joel talked a lot about daily protective work. Protective work is not protecting ourselves against any power. Protective work is the exercise of lifting ourselves in consciousness every morning, perhaps many times a day, to the altitude where we know that nothing in the leela has any power. We don't stay well by protecting ourselves from germs; we stay well by protecting ourselves from the human belief that germs have power. For example, we don't do protective work to keep the flu virus from making us sick. We do it to realize that the flu virus has no power. Remember, lies have no power except when they're accepted.

We practice protective work by starting each day, perhaps while still in bed, with a one or two-minute meditation remembering the truth: there is only one power; anything other

than WhatIs is impotent; and nothing can cause disharmony. Then during the day, when somebody says, "Are you going to get the flu vaccine?" we say to them, "No," and to ourselves, "because I don't need to, because the flu vaccine has no power and neither does the flu virus itself." Every time we're tempted to believe that something other than WhatIs has power, we remind ourselves that that's not true.

The work is daily because the six billion are transmitting, and we are receiving their false beliefs subliminally 24/7/52. We will become re-hypnotized if we don't take positive action.

Practice

None of these truths will have any effect unless we practice them. Knowing the truth intellectually has no power. Practicing develops the consciousness. Every time we're tempted to worry about unemployment, we remember WhatIs is not unemployed; every time we're tempted to try some shenanigan in business, we remember that there is no competition; every time we're tempted to take a vaccine, we remember that germs and viruses have no power. Every time we are tempted to believe something other than WhatIs has power, we remember that it doesn't, and it is not necessary for us to do anything. Remembering over and over is what builds consciousness.

As we practice, we become more deeply aware of truth. Human consciousness will always believe that the flu virus has the power to cause flu, but if we continue to remind ourselves over and over that it doesn't and it can't, we become more and more confident of that truth. We know it deeper, not intellectually, but spiritually, and this deepening results in less flu, fewer colds and fewer disharmonies in our life.

Mysticism is completely impractical as far as human consciousness is concerned, but we can see how very practical it is when we attain the experience of living a life by grace, which means living the life that is truly ours already, experiencing in this moment the fulfillment, harmony and joy that is ours.

VIII. Principles

We've done a lot pointing and gesturing. Now we're done with introducing the "letter of truth." This chapter is a collection of several teachers' spiritual principles we have found useful to work with. It is, of course, just more pointing, but you may be surprised at how much clearer these principles are than when you began reading this book. And, if you've already gotten a glimpse of the moon, this chapter may help focus it.

It's fine to read through this collection, but you will gain the greatest benefit if you work with one principle at a time. Barbara used to give her students "flash cards" which they would carry with them for a week. They would then meet every situation which led to an emotional reaction by pulling out the flash card to remind themselves of the truth about the situation.

You could write any one of these principles on a flash card and use it whenever any discomfort arises until it becomes part of your consciousness, rather than a principle you've memorized. This may take a week, or a month, or a year. However, knowing the principle does not change the picture. Realizing it does. After you've realized one principle, you could select another.

1. Is

Joel said the most important word in the Infinite Way® is "is." God is. Or Is is "is-ing," being. WhatIs is. Not was, not will be, but is. And, WhatIs is all there is.

We get the same principle from India's Advaita Vedanta: "All there is is Consciousness." Realizing this Great Fact is the work, *realizing* it, not playing with it with our intellects.

2. WhatIs is omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent.

We've heard about the three omni's, even in orthodoxy, and now they become clear. WhatIs is all there is means there's nothing else.

WhatIs is omnipresent because omnipresent means everywhere and everywhere that is is within the Consciousness that WhatIs is. "Here" means "where I am conscious," so, with respect to WhatIs, there is nowhere that is not here.

Omniscient means all-knowing. WhatIs is omniscient because "being conscious of" means knowing in this sense. Nothing is that isn't within Consciousness, so nothing is unknown.

And WhatIs is also omnipotent, all power, because, being all there is, there can't be any other powers.

3. One power, no power.

This is really Joel's first step in healing. An important thing to notice about omnipresence and omnipotence is that they leave nothing to use power on or against. Omnipotence used to sound like such a powerful word. We loved thinking that god has all power, and maybe we can get it to apply its power to our situations. But there's no reason to use power, even within the leela. Nothing in the leela has any power of its own.

4. WhatIs is eternal.

And WhatIs is eternal, not in the sense of a very long time – eternal is not a time span from very long ago to infinitely far out in the future – eternal exists outside of time, eternal is now, the eternal now that is always here. Eternal has nothing to do with time. WhatIs is everywhere and everywhen.

If we eliminate our consideration of a personal sense of self, pay no attention to any thinking, stop focusing on what's appearing out there, and become aware of the awareness that is aware of all of this, that awareness is what is eternal, now, one, unchanging, outside of time. It is WhatIs. The leela is all happening within it.

5. WhatIs is harmonious.

Since WhatIs is eternal and unchanging (outside of time) there is perfect harmony. If It had created anything inimical to Itself, it would not be eternal.

6. WhatIs is the only creator.

WhatIs, being all there is and the only power, must be the only creator. Knowing that, and knowing that WhatIs did not create any disharmony, establishes the foundation for knowing that the appearance of disharmony is illusion, hypnotism, unreal. A corollary of this principle is that WhatIs is the only cause.

7. As: WhatIs appears as individual consciousness.

Joel's second most important word in The Infinite Way® is "as." WhatIs is expressing *as* impersonal, individual consciousness. Man and the universe are the expression of WhatIs in mind. Consciousness is expressing Itself as us, individual human consciousnesses. It's also expressing itself as granite. We don't think of granite as conscious, but there's nothing but consciousness, so granite is a level of consciousness that appears to us to be immobile and unaware.

8. There is only One.

There is only one Self, expressed as infinite form. The forms are within one mind. We, as individual expressions of Consciousness having human experiences, think we're separate individuals, but there's only the one Consciousness expressed. My consciousness and your consciousness are expressions of the one Consciousness, facets of the diamond, limited only by our idea that we're limited.

An aspect of the one Consciousness is Life, one Life expressed individually as the life of everything. There's not my life, your life, his life, her life and the cat's life. There's one Life expressed in me (as what I think of as my life) and in you (as what you think of as your life). The leaves and branches of a tree participate in the life of the tree, and the tree's life is really an expression of the one Life. There's one Life expressed everywhere, which makes it rather nonsensical for us to get involved in what's wrong with *our* lives or *our* health. If we're not seeing our lives as having all the implied health of the one Life, then we're just seeing incorrectly.

Also, there's only one substance, Consciousness. Substance is just a word we finger-pointers use for another aspect of Consciousness. Since all there is is Consciousness, the only substance with which to create is Consciousness.

And there's only one nature. The nature of everything is the nature of WhatIs.

9. Man and the universe are formed in mind.

By "universe" we mean the visible appearance of WhatIs in mind. That's what mind is: it forms the content of the consciousness governing it. What we're looking at and dealing with is just Consciousness formed in mind.

10 Matter is mind.

A detail of the previous principle is that matter is mind. Knowing that is what distinguishes the mental level of human consciousness from the material level, and the metaphysical churches from the orthodox churches. Matter is mind formed. Mind is the substance of matter.

11. The visible is the effect of the invisible.

What's visible is consciousness formed. Everything perceived through our five senses is the reflection of something in invisible consciousness.

There's only one cause. Everything in a dream is caused by the dreamer's consciousness, not by the actors or actions in the dream. Similarly everything in this leela is caused by Consciousness expressed as individual consciousnesses. The actors and actions are all effects.

Realizing that turns human thinking upside down. We can't go out there for anything. There's no such thing as "getting" from out there. Everything we see is effect, not cause. There are no causes or sources out there. Trying to get from out there is a block in supply consciousness.

12. Consciousness creates, mind forms, intellect interprets.

After consciousness has created and mind has formed images of that creation, our intellects still have a few things to say. It's the intellect that interprets what we experience, based on our individual conditioning. The intellect labels objects, separates them from each other and adds the conditions we attribute to them. The intellect decides whether something is good or bad, pretty or ugly, etc.

13 This is a spiritual universe.

This is a spiritual universe, entirely spiritual. That's the same as saying all there is is Consciousness, or God is, or Is is is-ing. What we're looking at, what we think of as a material universe, is a reflection in mind of the spiritual universe. There is nothing but spirit. Spirit, which is consciousness, is formed in mind as the universe that we experience.

14. The nature of man appears to be dual: spiritual and human.

"Spiritual beings having human experiences" well describes our situation. But we *are* spiritual beings; all there is is Consciousness. Our human experience is simply the effect of out current level of human awareness formed in mind.

15. The nature of "this world" is hypnotism in Mind.

Jesus talked about "my kingdom" not being of "this world." By "my kingdom," he meant the spiritual reality, by "this world," the human experience. The human experience, which we also refer to as maya or leela, is hypnotism formed in the mind. Just as a hypnotist can hypnotize us into seeing a white poodle that isn't there, human consciousness is hypnotizing us to see a world of duality, good and evil, more than one power, that isn't there. We're seeing matter but it's all hypnotism; it's mind forming our beliefs for us.

16. This is a perceptual Universe.

It's all hypnotism. The universe is purely perceptual, just like the white poodle or your dreams.

17. Hypnosis functions through suggestion.

The human experience, the extent to which we are human, is the extent to which we're attuned to the universal human beliefs, which means the extent to which we are subliminally receiving and rebroadcasting human beliefs. Since there is only one consciousness and one mind, and we all are participating in it, the human beliefs are continually being subliminally suggested to us. Those of us who respond to a particular belief take it into our individual consciousness, manifest it, and radiate it back out.

18. Believing is seeing.

Human consciousness says seeing is believing, but knowing how mind works, we realize that the reverse is true, believing is seeing.

19. There is no God in the human world.

One of Joel's earliest understandings was that there is no God in the human world. It came as a result of his observing that he could find no evidence of God in the world, except in the rare cases when some enlightened being revealed it.

The human world is the expression of the beliefs in human consciousness, and humans believe finite, limited, erroneous concepts. WhatIs cannot be in human consciousness, since human consciousness is really nothing more than the beliefs in things other that WhatIs.

20. God functions only where God is realized.

"God is realized" means that WhatIs is in the consciousness of the one who realizes, and hence It governs what is formed by that individual's mind. God is only effective where God is realized doesn't mean that WhatIs starts doing something when and where somebody realizes it. It means that in the presence of someone who is realized we are lifted to the point that we too begin to see WhatIs instead of seeing what isn't. All we're doing is becoming aware of what has eternally been true. WhatIs is omnipresent, but it has to be realized to be experienced.

21. There is no God except in illumined consciousness.

Joel went on to say there is no God as God, meaning there is no separate, independent God as described by orthodox religions. All the human concepts of God are just concepts. The only place WhatIs "exists" is as illumined consciousnesses. More precisely, WhatIs is

Consciousness, the same Consciousness that an illumined consciousness is. There is, in fact, only one illumined consciousness.

22. Error is impersonal.

Every appearance of error (evil, lack, limitation, disease, death, etc.) is the result of ignorantly accepting the beliefs in human consciousness. These beliefs are being broadcast impersonally, with no intent or target.

23. There is no such thing as personal evil.

There is no such thing as a personal evil is a restatement of the previous principle, but it is often more difficult to deal with, especially for those who like to think that others are doing it to them. There's no such thing as evil for which anyone is individually responsible. There is no such thing as anyone being responsible for any of the sin, evils, lack, etc. that come into their experience. Evil is the result of impersonal human consciousness and personal ignorance. The truth about evil doers is that they are expressions of WhatIs. It is within the leela, the human experience, that they are listening to the human beliefs being radiated and accepting some of them, and that's called ignorance. That's the ignorance that Patanjali was talking about as the cause of suffering, accepting the beliefs or temptations that are being offered. Actually, in the leela, people are doing the best they can, given their current information and understanding. If they could do better, they would.

24. Impersonalization

Probably the third most important word in The Infinite Way® is impersonalization. Everything is impersonal. There are four types of impersonalization to understand: WhatIs, ourSelves, human consciousness and error.

WhatIs is impersonal, absolutely impersonal, no personality, no awareness of any personalities. WhatIs is just expressing Itself as Itself in all Its different forms.

OurSelves, who we really are, are also impersonal. WhatIs is expressed as *impersonal*, individual consciousness. Our personalities, as well as our size, shape, color, sex, etc. are all part of the costume belonging to the role we are playing in the leela.

The importance of realizing ourselves as impersonal is clear. Our impersonal selves, ourSelves, are the ones that are one with WhatIs, the ones without a sense of separation. It is our personal senses of I that think they are separate from WhatIs, on their own, capable of experiencing lack, limitation, sickness, ignorance, etc. Impersonalizing ourselves is realizing ourSelves, our oneness with the eternal harmony of WhatIs.

Impersonal also applies to human consciousness. Human consciousness, the source of all evil and error, is completely impersonal. It has no center, no ego, no individuality. It's all the human consciousnesses linked together. It has no plans or strategies, no one to select targets. It's not radiating its beliefs at anybody; it's just believing. It has no power, no law to sustain it; it's nothing, a very effective nothing in the leela.

And of course, error is impersonal as pointed out explicitly in the preceding principle.

25. The nature of true prayer is silence.

Our traditional orthodox concepts of prayer have been ineffective. The idea of influencing WhatIs, or getting WhatIs to do something, or pointing out anything to omniscient WhatIs that it is unconscious of, or educating WhatIs about how things should be, is ludicrous. The only meaningful use of prayer is to open communication and realize the presence of WhatIs. We do this by entering the silence.

Communion leads to the realization of WhatIs, and the realization of WhatIs meets whatever need we would have prayed for, because now we're realizing the presence of this eternal, harmonious, fulfilled being which we are, and that starts out-picturing as our experience. The realization of WhatIs *is* Grace.

26. An illumined consciousness does not love, hate, fear or desire anything.

All of Barbara's lists become empty when we are illumined because we realize all the things on the lists are just forms in mind. They are just effects. There's nothing out there, nothing to get, nothing to love or desire, nothing to fear, nothing to hate, nothing to overcome. Consciousness is the only source. An illumined consciousness sees form as form. It realizes that the image in the mirror is a reflection.

27. An illumined consciousness is ego-less.

An ego-less consciousness is another way of saying an impersonal individual consciousness.

28. An illumined consciousness does not suffer.

We now see that an illumined consciousness has overcome all of Patanjali's sources of suffering: ignorance, ego, attraction, aversion and fear of death.

29. Nothing can come into our life except as an activity of our consciousness.

Everything we experience is the content of our consciousness formed in mind. This one should be pretty clear by now. This is the axiom for understanding what appears to be.

Finally, we have Robert's four principles of self realization.

30. Everything is an emanation of the mind.

Everything being the mind's emanation is almost identical to Joel's axiom (#29). It's interesting to see that an enlightened master of the Advaita Vedanta tradition, a jnani, agrees so completely with the Infinite Way® teachings. This is also true of the next two principles.

31. You were never born, will never die, and do not exist now.

Robert's talking about the fact that the entire human experience in the leela has exactly the same reality as your dream last night. The you in your dream last night was never born, never died, and did not exist even during the dream. It was just your subconsciousness forming images in mind. The I in the leela, which humans think they are, is not different from the I in dreams in any significant way.

Also, the impersonal I am that you really are was never born, will never die, and does not exist now in any material sense.

32. Nothing has an ego – nothing is a cause.

Everything is impersonal and everything we see is an effect.

33. To find out what self realization is we have to find out what it is not.

Self realization is ineffable, indescribable. We can't even talk about what it is. What we have to do is understand and thus eliminate what it isn't. And when we get rid of everything it isn't, there it is.

By seeing through all our concepts about self-realization, about WhatIs, and by recognizing the leela for what it is, we are becoming Self-realized. Eventually we're left in the silence with ourSelves.